

THE PREACHER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

*Other Volumes*

LENT AND EASTERTIDE

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION TO  
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ADVENT TO QUINQUAGESIMA

# THE PREACHER' ENCYCLOPEDIA

*Compiled and Edited under the Supervision of  
His Eminence*

A N G E L   C A R D I N A L   H E R R E R A

Bishop of Malaga

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*Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost*

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 3. 4-9

Gospel: Luke io. 23-37

Texts concerning charity towards one's neighbour

1. *Fraternal charity:*

If thou hast an enemy, and findest his ox or his ass going astray, take it back to him. Here is one who hates thee, and his ass has fallen under its burden; do not pass by, help him to lift it up. Exod. 23. 4-5.

If an alien comes to dwell in your land, and settles down among you, do not treat him disdainfully; welcome him as if he were native bom, and do him kindness as if he were one of yourselves, remembering that you were aliens once, in the land of Egypt; the Lord your God remembers. Lev. 19. 33-34.

Gracious the sight, and full of comfort, when brethren dwell united. Ps. 132. 1.

2. *Love for one's neighbour:*

Shame on the man who holds his neighbour in contempt; mercy to the poor brings a blessing. Prov. 14. 21.

Wouldst thou rather be thy neighbour's enemy than friend? Wouldst thou earn, by ill-nature, an ill name, and be despised for such faults as these, envy and hypocrisy? Ecclus. 6. 1.

Man's mercy extends only to his neighbour; God has pity on all living things. Ecclus. 18. 12.

Hast thou heard a tale to thy neighbour's disadvantage ? Take it to the grave with thee. Courage, man! It will not burst thee. Ecclus. 19. 10.

Forgive thy neighbour his fault, and for thy own sins thy prayer shall win pardon; should man bear man a grudge, and yet look to the Lord for healing? Ecclus. 28. 2-3.

Kindness bids thee go bail for thy neighbour; he has lost all shame, if he plays thee false. Ecclus. 29. 19.

3. *Charity in the Gospels:*

How is it that thou canst see the speck of dust which is in thy brother's eye, and art not aware of the beam which is in thy own? Matt. 7. 3.



## TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Honour thy father and thy mother, and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Matt. 19. 19.

And the second, its like, is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Mark 12. 31.

Do not let anybody have a claim upon you, except the claim which binds us to love one another. Rom. 13. 8.

The man who loves his neighbour has done all that the law demands. *Ibid*, verse 10.

Each of us ought to give way to his neighbour where it serves a good purpose by building up his faith. Rom. 15. 2.

True, you do well to observe, in their regard, the royal law' you find in the words of Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. James 2. 8.

If a man boasts of loving God, while he hates his own brother, he is a liar. He has seen his brother, and has no love for him; what love can he have for the God he has never seen? 1 John 4. 20.

No, this is the divine command that has been given us; the man who loves God must be one who loves his brother as well. *Ibid*. verse 21.

## SECTION II GENERAL COMMENTS

### L LITURGICAL

#### 1. *The Mass*:

One of the richest in variety and profound thought. Each formula appears independent one from the others. In each there is a distinct doctrine taught, of great value in the spiritual life. Thus the Collect has a clear reference to actual grace. The Epistle teaches us the authority of the preachers of the Gospel, the Communion recalls the harvest and applies it to the Eucharist, while the Postcommunion is a veritable treatise on the effects of Communion.

#### 2. *Three images*:

Liturgists usually try to relate the different parts of the Mass; thus Parsch joins the ideas of the Epistle, the Gospel and the Offertory—but, although useful from the spiritual point of view, this connection does not cease to be an arbitrary one.

##### (a) First image:

The Gospel shows us the Good Samaritan, by which parable Christ strove to teach us the doctrine of fraternal charity, while the Church uses it today to show us the work of redemption. The man fallen among robbers is human nature, deprived of supernatural gifts and wounded in his natural faculties. The Old Law passes him by; it cannot provide a cure. Then comes Christ, the Good Samaritan, dressed in the tunic of humility, pouring in oil and wine—the work of the redemption and that of the Mass.

## (b) Second image:

The face of Moses was shining after his conversation with God. What should be the effect of the Mass on a son of God who has been present at it? The Eucharist illuminates us. We should go from Mass to our daily tasks with our face shining and with brilliance of soul.

## (c) Third image:

Moses the figure of Christ, who makes eternal intercession for us and reconciles us to the Father (the Offertory). Each Mass is the representation of the sacrifice of the Cross.

3. *The Epistle and Offertory:*

Schuster also relates the Epistle and the Offertory. He says: In the extract from the second Epistle to the Corinthians (3. 4-9)—which is in close connection with the Offertory for today, containing the sublime prayer of Moses—St Paul, in order to uphold his authority against those who were questioning it, speaks to his disciples at Corinth of the glory which was formerly reflected on the face of the great Lawgiver of Israel, so that he was obliged to cover its brightness with a veil. If God desired to surround with so much brilliance the Old Testament, which was destined to be made void, how much greater should not be the glory and the authority of the apostles and ministers of the New Covenant?

4. *The Offertory:*

Schuster says: From a musical point of view it is one of the most beautiful pieces in the Gregorian collection. In it we have the prayer of Moses on that occasion when Jehovah was about to destroy utterly the Israelites after their sin of idolatry in connection with the golden calf. The great leader calls upon the Lord to remember the merits of the ancient Patriarchs and the glorious promises made to them. By these words God was appeased; from which it is clearly seen that the Catholic doctrine concerning the invocation of the Saints is both legitimate and beneficial, and that it is founded on Holy Scripture. This Offertory merits a full development, so that the faithful may learn the beauty of this doctrine and apply it.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

## A: The Epistle: 2 Cor. 3. 4-9

i. *Texts:*

## (a) Such, through Christ, is the confidence ...

This confidence which Paul has is related to the verses which go before, in which he points out that he has no need of letters of

recommendation, because his hearers and their faith are the best recommendation for an apostle. However, he does not wish to glory in his own merits, for everything he has comes to him from above.

(b) since it is he who has enabled us to promulgate his new law...

Having said this St Paul indulges in one of his famous digressions—so common in his writings. He speaks of the greatness of this new Law in comparison with the Old Law. The old law is an institution which inflicts death, a law of the letter, not of the spirit. The law of Christ is very different from this,

(c) if there is a splendour in the proclamation of our guilt...

He seems to be talking to those who tried to introduce Jewish practices, those perhaps, who said that they were of the faction of Peter. He insists, to them, on the glory of the New Law. It should be pointed out that the Law of Moses, even though one of death, of the letter and of condemnation, was still glorious, both because of its origin, its precepts, the truth of its doctrine, etc. All that it had of death was extrinsic to it, due to sin and human weakness, which it could not cure of itself. But it cannot stand comparison with the New Law of love.

## *2. Applications:*

The best theme for preaching seems to be contained in verse 5: the need for grace, humility and confidence in God, which should come from the spirit of the New Law.

The doctrine of the Pharisees was essentially one of the letter of the law as against its spirit, from which arose an external, ritualistic concept of religion and holiness. They had forgotten the frequent calls of the Prophets, who demanded an interior purity of heart. Therefore they did not understand the preaching of Christ, which insisted on the same thing. The interior cleanliness of the cup is to be preferred to the exterior. Whited sepulchres are all too common! It is better to love God and our neighbour than to pay dues, etc. We should take this into consideration when we think of almsdeeds, etc.

When St Paul insists that we are free, he is thinking, not merely of the bonds of the flesh, but also of this dictatorship of external precepts, beyond which we should seek the great open horizons of the truth. These principles should be directives for life, both in the practice of external observances and also in the judging of the neighbour—not burdening him too much while we leave ourselves delightfully free. Love of God and love of the neighbour—those are the two important things.



## GENERAL COMMENTS

### B: The Gospel: Luke 10. 23-37

#### 1. *Occasion and argument:*

The Gospel of today presents us with three different parts, without any real connection. The first is contained in verses 25-28, the question proposed by the Doctor of the Law; the others contain the celebrated parable of the Samaritan.

The first section is not even in chronological order, since it merely repeats certain phrases which our Lord used on the occasion of the return of his disciples from their first mission, while the parable of the Good Samaritan was probably taught in some synagogue.

#### 2. *Blessed are the eyes that see what you see . . .*

Jesus sees, in this mission of the disciples, the beginning of Satan's defeat. Therefore he gives thanks to his Father, who has hidden these mysteries from the wise and prudent of this world, and has revealed them to these little ones whom Christ has chosen. The whole of the history of Israel has been but a preparation for this moment, if they did but know it. The same is true of us. Our shout of triumph is due, not to a momentary thing, but to the inauguration of a period of history—a perpetual triumph of Christ over his enemies.

#### 3. *The parable:*

##### (a) The first question:

It is quite possible that this happened in a synagogue and possibly in Jericho itself.

##### (b) A doctor of the law:

Probably a Pharisee, trying to tempt our Lord. His intention was not quite as evil as that of some of his companions, because the problem is not so deep or difficult. It is an attempt to see how far our Lord's knowledge of these things goes, and to begin a discussion with him which will allow the Pharisee to show off his knowledge of the law. Once he has obtained the answer to the first part of his question he tries to take the discussion into typical pharisaical territory.

##### (c) What must I do . . . ?

The Lord begins his answer with the usual ironical tone which he will use always with these people. What is it that is written in the law? This should be an easy question for you, a doctor of the law, to answer! How do you, who are an expert, explain it? Once the reply has been given—a simple one for any good Israelite—the Lord continues: Do this, and thou shalt find life.



## (d) Second part—the reply of the Pharisee:

And who is my neighbour? We must admit that the question was not so easy then as it is now. For a proud Roman it would have been difficult to see his neighbour in the Gaul or the Jew. Race, colour, nationality divided humanity into watertight compartments. This was even more true of the Jews, who despised all who were not of their race, calling them by the name of *goim*—people. They were the chosen people of God, the rest...?

## (e) The Lord's reply:

We can only admire the way he teaches, simply yet graphically. Anyone can understand his reply.

## (f) The parable:

Christ was so accustomed to the region and history of Palestine that his narrative is full of local interest. Jerusalem was very near Jericho—only 27 kilometres away; but it was a difficult road, winding and climbing all the time, with many caves and rocks at the sides of the path, which gave excellent cover for robbers of all kinds. There is even an inn there which is today known as El Ahmar.

The man—certainly a Jew—fell among robbers of this kind. A priest and a Levite passed by, on the way to their service of God in the Temple. We know that many of these lived in Jericho. Their office, the state of the wounded man, all demand a different kind of reaction to that which we find in them. The Samaritan alone comes to his help.

Oil and wine, together with rough bread, were the usual things carried on a journey, and both oil and wine were frequently used to cure wounds and ulcers, one as an astringent and disinfectant, the other for its soothing properties. Once the first remedies have been applied the Samaritan carries the man to the inn and pays for his stay there, promising that he will also pay if anything further is necessary.

## (g) The lesson:

So simple that even the Pharisee can draw it for himself. Our Lord says: Go thy way, and do thou likewise.

## (h) Literal applications:

The whole of the law is summed up in the love of God and the neighbour. Without the first there is no religion, without the second there is no love of God. The man who imagines that he loves God but who does not love his brethren really disobeys the law of God, despises his brothers, has no love for God's image in others, forgets the price of his blood, shed for all men, and the laws of humanity which unite us all.

The love of God can be measured, then, by the love we have for our neighbour, and the latter, if it wishes to be more than mere philanthropy, must take its measure from the love of God. This love must be universal, as is its foundation, without any other distinction except that demanded by our greater proximity to God and our neighbour's extreme need. It must be both affective and effective, as was that of the Samaritan.

There is, however, another point which our Lord almost certainly intended to teach us through the parable. The priest and Levite—pious people certainly, who were on their way to worship God, and yet they pass by the one in need. How many times we do the same with our servants, without realizing their need and without any real interest in them! The same is true of our dealings with the working classes.

The parable has also been applied to human nature in general. Others have spoken of the wine of fraternal correction and the oil of gentleness.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Extracts from his Commentary on Romans, Hom. 23, n. 3 ad 5; PG. 32, 346 fl'.)

#### 1. *Love for the neighbour:*

Do not let anybody have a claim upon you, except the claim which binds us to love one another (Rom. 13. 8). He returns again to the mother of all good, to the one who taught him all that he has already said and to the cause of all virtue, and he calls it a 'claim', not in the sense of a tax or tribute, but as a debt which always has to be paid. It is a debt which never ceases; what is more, it should be paid always without ever being satisfied in full. It is one which is always in the process of being paid and is always owed.

Having explained how we should love, he goes on to tell us the gain we can expect from that love, saying: The man who loves his neighbour has done all that the law demands. And do not imagine that to be a favour, because it is also something -which is owing. You should love your brother because of his spiritual relationship to you; and not merely for that reason, but because we are all members, one of another. If love is lost, all is lost. Love your brother, therefore. If you gain so much by it that through it you fulfil all the law, then you should love as one who has received such a great reward.

#### 2. *A strong love:*

He does not merely exact love from us, but a strong love. He does not merely say, Love your neighbour, but also, As yourself. For that

reason Christ says that the Law and the Prophets depend on this love.... We are an infinite distance from him, and yet he places our mutual love next to that by which we love him; he says they are alike. Therefore, measuring them both by the same standard, he says that they must both be with the whole heart, the whole mind, the whole soul. St Paul assures us that without this love for the neighbour the former love for God is of little use. Just as we, if we love someone, say: If you love me, you will also love him, so he says the same to us: If you love me, feed my sheep (John 21. 17).

Love of our neighbour refrains from doing harm of any kind; that is why it fulfils the demands of the law (Rom. 13. 10). Do you not see how love has both virtues, that of abstaining from evil and doing good, since it is the fulfilment of the law? It is not only careful to see to it that we know what we should do, it also helps us to accomplish it, not part, but all of it?

### 3. *How God loves us:*

We must love one another as we love God, who has first loved us. Among men, if you love one who is already loved, the first lover is annoyed; but God deigns to have for you a common and universal love. Human love is full of envy and jealousy; the divine love is free from all such passions. That is why it seeks those who will share in the same kind of love. Love with me, it says, and then I shall love you even more. Do you hear these words of ardent love? If you love those whom I love, then I shall know that you love me sincerely. He desires our health in a way which he declared long ago, when he said: Let us make man to our own image and likeness.... And when he rebukes him for his sin, see how meekly he does it. He could have said: Miserable criminal, who, full of all benefits, have believed the devil and left your benefactor! You have joined yourself to Satan! Instead of that he says: Who told thee of thy nakedness? Or hast thou eaten of the tree, whose fruit I forbade thee to eat? (Gen. 3. 11). Just as a father, who has forbidden his son to touch a sword, should say to him, on seeing his wounds, How did you hurt yourself? Almost certainly, because you did not heed my commands. Do you not see how he speaks more as a friend than as the Lord, as a friend who has been despised, I say, but who does not cease from speaking for all that?

### 4. *How we must love him:*

Let us love him, then, as he desires to be loved. If we separate ourselves from him, he continues to love us; if we do not want to turn to him, he punishes us because he loves us, not from malice. See what he says through the mouth of Ezechiel to the city which he loved and from which he received nothing but offences. They shall be summoned to the attack, all those old lovers thou art

wearied of, beleaguer thee round about. . . ministers of my jealous anger (Ez. 23. 22 if.). What more could an ardent lover say, despised by his love yet in love with her still ?

God leaves no stone unturned to secure our love; for which reason he did not even pardon his own Son. We, however, are not meek, but cruel. At length let us be meek; let us love God as he should be loved, so that we may rejoice in virtue. Just as he who possesses a woman he loves does not notice the sadness of everyday life, think of what the pleasure will be of one who possesses this divine love. . . . Let us obey then, and rejoice in his love; and thus even here below we shall enjoy the delights of heaven, we shall live an angelic life and, even though we still dwell on earth, we shall not have less than those who live in heaven. After we have left this earth, in brilliance before the throne of God, we shall enjoy ineffable glory.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Extracts and summary of doctrine contained in the *De Disciplina Christiana*, PL. 40, 669-678).

### 1. *The command of love:*

We learn to live well so that we may live for ever. But there are many precepts of the law. Therefore God, so that there would be no excuse for any of us, sums them up in a simple and a clear formula. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Matt. 22. 37-40). This is what you are taught in this house of learning (the Church); to love God and your neighbour. God, as God, and your neighbour as yourself. There is nobody found equal to God, so that you can be told, Love God as you love that man. But on the other hand, so far as your neighbour is concerned, a rule has been found which is of use to you, because one has been found equal to your neighbour—namely, yourself. Do you want to know how you should love your neighbour? Then look to yourself, and as you love yourself, love him. There is no room for error here.

### 2. *The neighbour:*

We usually call by this name our parents, relations, etc.; but in truth there is no one so close to a man as another man. If we would say that only those are neighbours who have the same parents, then think of Adam and Eve, and you will see that we are all brothers; and if that is true so far as we are men, how much more so as Christians. As men we have had one common father, Adam, and a common mother, Eve. As Christians, we have a common Father—God; and a common mother, the Church.



3. *True love for ourselves:*

If you should be asked whether you love yourself you would undoubtedly say that you do. Who would be so foolish as to hate himself? You ask who hates himself? Then you must hate evil if you love yourself, because he who loves iniquity—and it is not I who say it, but the psalm—hates his own life (Ps. 10. 6). If then you love iniquity, listen to what Truth says to you, and in no obscure fashion. You hate yourself. And the more you say that you love yourself, so much the more do you hate yourself, because he who loves iniquity hates his own life. O man, how can you lose your life so? If you love yourself so much that you run the risk of damnation, you will almost certainly bring to that damnation those whom you love.

4. *Love your neighbour, properly:*

You will say to me: But I love my neighbour as myself. I hear you, indeed I do. You want to be drunk in that love for him, because you say that you love him as you love yourself. You say: Let us have a good time, eat and drink what we may. . . . You are human, indeed I should say a beast, because you love as they love. God made the beasts with their faces turned to the ground, seeking their pastures there; you he placed on two feet. He wished to see your face lifted to the heavens. Let not your face and heart look in different directions. What is more, hear the truth and do it; in the Church you hear it said: Lift up your hearts. Do not act a lie, then, in this house of learning. When you hear that, reply; and let your reply be the truth. Love yourself and love your neighbour as yourself. What else is it to have your heart lifted up on high if not that which I have already told you: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. There are two of these precepts, but would it not be enough to have just one? Yes, it would, if you understand it aright. Because on another occasion the Scriptures speak to us through the apostle: The man who loves his neighbour has done all that the law demands (Rom. 13. 10). . . . You see how everything has been simplified, brought down to one precept; yet we are still lazy. There were two commandments and they have been reduced to one only. Love your neighbour as you love yourself and it is enough. But love him as you love yourself, not as you hate yourself.

5. *Man's true happiness:*

Just as man could not make himself, neither can he make himself happy. Something which was not man made man, and something which is not man must make him happy. Therefore man, seeing that he cannot make himself happy, errs, and loves other things which will give him that happiness. And what do you think he loves and

thinks will give him this happiness? Gold, silver, possessions—in a word, money; because all that men possess and of which they are masters in this world is reduced to money. . . . Therefore what you love, O man, is money and it is money which you think will make you happy, that is why you love it so much. Is that so? Then if you love your neighbour as yourself, divide your wealth with him. You were talking about what you are; well, now you know. You are not prepared to divide your wealth with your neighbour.

(He then goes on to talk about the three pretexts by which misers try to avoid charity to others.)

I do not speak to envious people, I speak to those who desire the good of others, their friends, and who wish them to have as much as they have themselves. They desire good things for those in need, as much as they themselves have, but they do not want to give them anything of that which is theirs. Do you boast, O Christian, of desiring good for others in this way? In a better state than you are these beggars, who have nothing when they receive alms, and wish you well. Do you want those to wish you well who receive nothing from you? Well, then, give them something. I will go further; give to him who desires good things for you, Christ. He asks you for some of that which he gave you. Be ashamed. He who was rich desired to become poor, so that you should have poor to whom to give. Give something to your brother, to your neighbour, to your companion. You are rich; he is poor; but this life is a journey and you are on that journey together.

#### 6. *True piety:*

Perhaps you will say to me: If he is poor and I rich, then what can I do about it? Are you on the same journey together or not? I am rich and he is poor; and what does that mean except that I am laden down and he goes light-footed? What you are doing is remembering those saddle-bags which burden you and praise the weight which is upon you. What is more, you clutch those bags to you in such a way that they prevent you from extending your hand. O burdened and tied hand and foot! What are you boasting about and what do you praise? Untie your bonds, lessen the weight of those saddle-bags, give to your companion, and thus you lighten yourself and help him. In the midst of your praises of those heavy bags can be heard the voice of Christ, asking alms, and receiving none. . . .

#### 7. *The Christian's one treasure:*

Love your God. Money will not make you happy; it is you who honour it, and not it which will make you happy. Now that you love money so much and follow the path traced out by your desire for it, at least walk also along the road of charity. Look at the distance between money and your God. The very sun is more beautiful than your riches, and yet the sun is not your God. If the light is



more beautiful than money, how much more so the God who made them both! . . . Yet it is seen that you love money so much that when he commands you, you are prepared to undertake any kind of effort, sutler all yokes gladly, dare the seas and the winds of heaven. I have objects for you to love, but I cannot add anything which will increase that love. You love; then love me, says God. You love money; then at least love me as much. Certainly I am incomparably better than money, but I do not ask you for a greater love; love me at least as much as you love *it*....

8. *The perfection of Christian charity:*

What disputations, what book of philosophy or law of any society could be compared to these two precepts on which Christ proclaims the whole law to depend? Love of God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. He is the whole of physics, since the causes of all natures are enclosed in God, the Creator. Here is ethics, because a good and honest life consists in loving those things which should be loved and in the way in which they should be loved, that is, God and the neighbour. Here is the whole of logic, because the truth and light of the rational soul is nothing else but God. Here is the health of the State which is worthy of praise, because the society is founded on and preserved only through the sure foundation and bond of faith and concord. This is brought about when the common good is loved, which is the one true God, and when men love one another in him. . . .

9- *Relation between the two loves:*

If charity, in order to be perfect, must fulfil the two precepts of the love of God and that of the neighbour, why is it that the apostle, in both Epistles (Galatians and Romans), only speaks of the latter? Surely it is because men can lie when they talk of their love for God, since the proofs of it are rare; on the other hand it is easier to see that they do not love men when they act with malice towards them. It is a natural consequence that one who loves God with his whole heart, mind and soul will also love his neighbour as himself, since the one he loves with his whole heart, soul and mind, commands it. On the other hand, who is capable of loving his neighbour, all men, as himself unless he first loves God through whose command and grace he can love his neighbour?

Since it is an indispensable condition of the two precepts that one cannot exist without the other, it is enough to quote either one of them when our sanctification is understood; but it is better to refer to that one by which we are more easily convinced. That is why John says: If a man boasts of loving God, while he hates his own brother, he is a liar. He has seen his brother, and has no love for him; what love can he have for the God he has never seen? (1 John 4. 20).

## III. ST BERNARD

(Summary of the doctrine contained in his *Treatise on the Love of God*.)

*Motives for the love of God:*

(a) Because God has a right to be loved by us, for many reasons:

He gave us himself, by first loving us. There must be a return for such love. We should always remember who it is who loves us—it is God himself, the Lord of all creation; also who is loved—creatures who were in misery, his enemies, in fact, whom he first had to reconcile to himself.

How much he loves us, when he gives his only Son a redemption for all men (Rom. 8. 32). Greater love than this no man has . . . (John 15. 13).

(b) the benefits we receive through the divine love:

i. *in the body*. Food, light, the very air we breathe—all things which we possess and enjoy here on earth and which are necessary or even useful for our bodily life.

ii. *in the soul*. Man's greatness is in his use of free will, by which he is not merely above the rest of material creation but is also able to subject them to his will. By the light of his intelligence he is able to know his own dignity, even though he admits that it does not come to him from himself, but is a gift of God.

(c) we are all bound to love God:

Both pagans and Christians, but the latter much more, because of the greater benefits they have received.

Christians know how much they need Christ, and him crucified, and considering his wonderful love and charity towards them, they would be poor things indeed if they did not offer him in return all they are and possess. It should be easier to love him the more they recognize how much they owe him and how much they are loved by him.

Christians know how much Christ suffered for them; they see the Only-begotten Son of God with the cross on his shoulders, his majesty bruised and spit upon; they see the very Author of life nailed to a cross, pierced by the lance, covered with wounds and reproaches, giving up for his friends that beloved soul and life. He who sees all this must feel the sword of love pierce his heart.

They also know the fruits of that death, of that victory. Death is swallowed up in victory, slain by the Author of life and forming part of his triumph. From hell he rises to earth, and from earth to heaven, taking captivity captive with him, all those who were death's captives; so that now at the name of Jesus every knee should bow



on the earth, in hell and in heaven (Phil. 2. 10). See, too, how the earth, which before brought forth nothing but thorns and brambles, now grows green and flourishes under the new blessing of Christ.

## SECTION IV. THEOLOGAINS

### I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### Original sin and its effects

##### I. *The nature of original sin:*

(a) It is an inordinate disposition arising from the destruction of the harmony which was essential to original justice, even as bodily sickness is an inordinate disposition of the body, by reason of the destruction of that equilibrium which is essential to health (I-II. Q. 82. a. I. c).

(b) Habit is two-fold. The first is a habit whereby power is inclined to an act; thus science and virtue are called habits. In this way original sin is not a habit. The second kind of habit is the disposition of the complex nature by which that nature is well or ill disposed to something, chiefly when such a disposition has become like a second nature, as in the case of sickness or health. In this sense original sin is a habit (*ibid.*).

(c) Original sin denotes the privation of original justice, and besides this, the inordinate disposition of the parts of the soul. Consequently, it is not a pure privation, but a corruptive habit (*ibid, ad luni*).

(d) The whole order of original justice consists in man's will being subject to God: which subjection, first and chiefly, was in the will, whose function it is to love all the other parts to their end . . . so that the will being turned away from God, all the other powers of the soul became inordinate. Accordingly, the privation of original justice, whereby the will was made subject to God, is the formal element in original sin; while every other disorder of the soul's powers is a kind of material element in respect of original sin. Now, the inordinateness of the other powers of the soul consists chiefly in their turning inordinately to mutable good; which inordinateness may be called by the general name of concupiscence. Hence original sin is concupiscence materially, but privation of original justice formally (*ibid. a. 3. c*).

##### 2. *Imputability of it:*

Therefore we must explain the matter otherwise by saying that all men born of Adam may be considered as one man, inasmuch as they have one common nature, which they receive from their first parents; even as in civil matters, all who are members of one community are reputed as one body, and the whole community as one

man. . . . Accordingly, the multitude of men horn of Adam are as so many members of one body. Now the action of one member of the body, the hand, for example, is voluntary, not by the will of that hand, but by the will of the soul, the first mover of the members. Wherefore a murder which the hand commits would not be imputed as a sin to the hand, considered by itself as apart from the body, but is imputed to it as something belonging to man and moved by man's first moving principle. In this way, then, the disorder which is in this man born of Adam, is voluntary, not by his will, but by the will of his first parent, who, by the movement of generation, moves all who originate from him, even as the soul's will moves all the members to their actions. Hence the sin which is thus transmitted by the first parent to his descendants is called *original*, just as the sin which flows from the soul into the bodily members is called *actual* (*ibid.* a. 1. c).

### 3. *Transmitted:*

The corruption of original sin is nowise caused by God, but by the sin alone of our first parent through carnal generation. And so, since creation implies a relation in the soul to God alone, it cannot be said that the soul is tainted through being created. On the other hand, infusion implies relation both to God infusing and to the flesh into which the soul is infused. And so, with regard to God infusing, it cannot be said that the soul is stained through being infused; but only with regard to the body into which it is infused (Q. 83. a. 1. *ad. fin.*).

### 4. *Effects:*

(a) All actual sins virtually pre-exist in original sin, as in a principle, so that it is virtually many; or by the fact of there being many deformities in the sin of our first parents, *viz.* pride, disobedience, gluttony, and so forth; or by several parts of the soul being infected by original sin (*ibid.* Q. 82. a. 2. *ad. fin.*).

(b) Two things must be considered in the infection of original sin. First, its inherence in the subject; and in this respect it regards first the essence of the soul. . . . In the second place, we must consider its inclination to act; and in this way it regards the powers of the soul. It must therefore regard that power first in which is seated the first inclination to commit sin, and this is the will (Q. 83. a. 3. c).

(c) The good of human nature is three-fold. First there are the principles of which nature is constituted, and the properties which flow from them, such as the powers of the soul, and so forth. Secondly, since man has from nature an inclination to virtue . . . this inclination to virtue is a good of nature. Thirdly, the gift of original justice, conferred on the whole human nature in the person of the first man, may be called a good of nature.



Accordingly, the first-mentioned good of nature is neither destroyed nor diminished by sin. The third good of nature was entirely destroyed by the sin of our first parent. But the second good of nature, *viz.* the natural inclination to virtue, is diminished by sin (Q. 85. a. 1. c).

(d) Weakness, ignorance, malice and concupiscence as effects of original sin :

As a result of original justice, the reason had perfect hold over the lower parts of the soul, while reason itself was perfected by God and was subject to him. Now this same original justice is forfeited through the sin of our first parent, as already stated . . . so that all the powers of the soul are left, as it were, destitute of their proper order, whereby they are naturally directed to virtue; which destitution is called a wounding of nature.

Again, there are four powers of the soul that can be the subject of virtue ; *viz.* the reason, where prudence resides ; the will, where justice is; the irascible, the subject of fortitude; and the concupiscible, the subject of temperance. Therefore, in so far as the reason is deprived of its order to the truth, there is the wound of ignorance; in so far as the will is deprived of its order to the good, there is the wound of malice; in so far as the irascible is deprived of its order to the arduous, there is the wound of weakness; and in so far as the concupiscible is deprived of its order to the delectable, moderated by reason, there is the wound of concupiscence.

Accordingly, these are the four wounds inflicted on the whole of human nature as a result of our first parent's sin. But since the inclination to the good of virtue is diminished in each individual on account of actual sin . . . these four wounds are also the result of other sins, in so far as, through sin, the reason is obscured, especially in practical matters, the will hardened to evil, good actions become more difficult, and concupiscence more impetuous (Q. 85. a. 3. c).

(e) Death as effect of original sin:

One thing causes another in two ways; first by reason of itself; secondly, accidentally. By reason of itself one thing is the cause of another if it produces its effect by reason of the power of its nature or form, the result being that the effect is directly intended by the cause. Consequently, as death and such like defects are beside the intention of the sinner, it is evident that sin is not, of itself, the cause of these defects.

Accidentally one thing is the cause of another if it causes it by removing an obstacle; thus it is stated that by displacing a pillar a man moves accidentally the stone resting thereon. In this way the sin of our first parent is the cause *of* death and all such defects in human nature, in so far as by the sin *of* our first parent original justice was taken away, whereby not only were the lower powers of

the soul held together under the control of reason, without any disorder whatever, but also the whole body was held together in subjection to the soul, without any defect. . . . Wherefore, original justice being forfeited through the sin of our first parent, just as human nature was stricken in the soul by the disorder among the powers, as stated above, so also it became subject to corruption, by reason of disorder in the body.

Now, the withdrawal of original justice has the character of punishment, even as the withdrawal of grace has. Consequently, death and all consequent bodily defects are punishments of original sin. And although the defects are not intended by the sinner, nevertheless, they are ordered according to the justice of God who inflicts them as punishments (Q\_. 85. a. 6. c).

## II. BILLOT

(Summary of the doctrine contained in his *De Sacramentis*, Preface, concerning this parable.)

### 1. *The parable:*

This parable gives us the image of original sin. The man was Adam, father and head of the human race, in whom all sinned. The city is the state of original justice, from which we fall, to submerge ourselves in this mortal state, given the name of Jericho. The robbers are the devil and his angels, into whose hands the first man fell, and his descendants. The robbery and the wounds represent the loss of original justice. We shall be more aware of this if we remember the great benefits which that justice brought to us. It raised man to an end which is above his natural powers, and also it subjected the inferior powers of man to the higher, thus preventing concupiscence from having full sway.

### 2. *The robbery:*

Privation of original justice is a robbery, because it removes from man his direction towards the supernatural end; but it is also a wound in so far as, by taking away from him original innocence, it also removes that which perfected our human nature. Hence weakness in the fulfilment of the precepts of the natural law (Rom. 7. 4). Therefore theologians say that man has been deprived by original sin of the free gifts of God and wounded in his natural gifts.

### 3. *The priest and Levite:*

These represent the Old Testament, whose ceremonies and precepts were enough to show us the defects but not enough to give us a cure for them. . . . To give us the remedy it was necessary that someone should return to us a spiritual anointing and a vital power;

and that one was Christ, our Lord. He united our mortality to his life; and he who was life itself died for us, giving us through the sacraments, his very own life.

4. *Redemption:*

The mercy of our Redeemer is shown in the image of this Samaritan who not merely has pity on the wounded man, but also applies the cure for his wounds. This is an image of the sacraments, instituted by our Saviour to heal the wounds of sin. The inn is the Church, founded by him to restore energy to those who have been wounded by sin, and who are on their way to their heavenly home.

5. *The Church:*

As the Samaritan could not remain with the wounded man, so Christ had to return to heaven; but he did not forget his own. He left them the Church. The innkeeper is the hierarchy of that Church.

6. *The sacraments:*

The two coins represent the doctrine of the Gospels and the sacraments of the New Law. The latter give us the medicine we need to cure us, until, at the end of the world, our Good Samaritan shall come again.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

#### The love of our neighbour

(*The Way of Perfection*, chap. 4, 5, 6)

*The need for true love:*

Do not suppose, my friends and sisters, that I am going to charge you to do a great many things . . . there are only three things which I will explain at some length and which are taken from our Constitution itself. It is essential that we should understand how important they are to us in helping us to preserve that peace, both inward and outward, which the Lord so earnestly recommended to us. One of these is love for each other; the second, detachment from all created things; the third, true humility, which, although I put it last, is the most important of the three and embraces all the rest.

With regard to the first—namely, love for each other—this is of very great importance; for there is nothing, however annoying, that cannot easily be borne by those who love each other, and anything which causes annoyance must be quite exceptional. If this commandment were kept in the world as it should be, I believe it would



take us a long way towards the keeping of the rest; but, what with having too much love for each other or too little, we never manage to keep it perfectly. It may seem that for us to have too much love for each other cannot be wrong, but I do not think anyone who had not been an eyewitness of it, would believe how much evil and how many imperfections can result from this. The devil sets many snares here which the consciences of those who aim only in a rough-and-ready way at pleasing God seldom observe. Indeed they think that they are acting virtuously; but those who are aiming at perfection understand what they are very well; little by little they deprive the will of the strength which it needs if it is to employ itself wholly in the love of God.

This is even more applicable to women than it is to men, and the harm which it does to community life is very serious. One result of it is that all the nuns do not love each other equally: some injury done to a friend is resented; a nun desires to have something to give to her friend or tries to make time for talking to her, and often her object in doing this is to tell her how fond she is of her, and other irrelevant things, rather than how much she loves God. These intimate friendships are seldom calculated to make for the love of God: I am more inclined to believe that the devil initiates them so as to create factions within religious Orders. When a friendship has for its object the service of His Majesty, it at once becomes clear that the will is devoid of passion and indeed is helping to conquer other passions. . . .

All must be friends with each other, love each other, be fond of each other, help each other. For the love of God, refrain from making individual friendships, however holy, for even among brothers and sisters such things are apt to be poisonous, and I can see no advantage in them; when they are between other relatives, they are much more dangerous and become a pest. Believe me, sisters, though I may seem to you extreme in this, great perfection and great peace come from doing what I say and many occasions of sin may be avoided by those who are not strong. If our will becomes more inclined to one person than to another (this cannot be helped, because it is natural—it often leads us to love the person who has the most faults if she is the most richly endowed by nature), we must exercise a firm restraint on ourselves, and not allow ourselves to be conquered by our affections. Let us love the virtues and inward goodness, and let us always apply ourselves and take care to avoid attaching importance to externals.

Let us not allow our will to be the slave of any, sisters, save of him who bought it with his blood. Otherwise, before we know where we are, we shall find ourselves trapped, and unable to move. God help me! The puerilities which result from this are innumerable. And, because they are so trivial that only those who see *Ιιολν* bad

they are will realize and believe it, there is no point in speaking of them here, except to say that they are wrong in anyone, and in a prioress, pestilential....

Returning to the question of our love for one another, it seems quite unnecessary to commend this to you, for where are there people so brutish as not to love one another when they live together, and continually in one another's company, indulge in no conversation, association or recreation with any outside their house, and believe that God loves us and that they themselves love God since they are leaving everything for His Majesty ?...

There are two kinds of love of which I am speaking. The one is purely spiritual and apparently has nothing to do with sensuality or the tenderness of our nature, either of which might stain its purity. The other is also spiritual, but mingled with it are our sensuality and weakness; yet it is a worthy love, which, as between relatives and friends, seems lawful. Of this I have already said sufficient.

It is of the first kind of spiritual love that I would speak now. It is untainted by any son of passion, for such a thing would completely spoil its harmony. If it leads us to treat virtuous people, especially confessors, with moderation and discretion, it is profitable; but, if the confessor is seen to be tending in any way towards vanity, he should be regarded with grave suspicion, and, in such a case, conversation with him, however edifying, should be avoided, and the sister should make her confession briefly and say nothing more. It would be best for her, indeed, to tell the superior that she does not get on with him, and go elsewhere; this is the safest way, providing it can be done without injuring his reputation. . . .

Now it seems to me that when God has brought someone to a clear knowledge of the world, and of its nature, and of the fact that another world (or, let us say, another kingdom) exists, and that there is a great difference between the one and the other, the one being eternal and the other a dream only; and of what it is to love the Creator and what to love the creature (this must be discovered by experience, for it is a very different matter from merely thinking about it and believing it); when one understands by sight and experience what can be gained by the one practice and lost by the other, and what the Creator is and what the creature, and many other things which the Lord teaches to those who are willing to devote themselves to be taught by him in prayer, or whom His Majesty wishes to teach it—then one loves very differently from those of us who have not advanced thus far.

It may be, sisters, that you think it irrelevant for me to treat of this, and you may say that you already know' everything that I have said. God grant that this may be so, and that you may indeed know it in the only way which has any meaning, and that it may be graven upon your inmost being and that you may never for a moment

depart from it; for, if you know it, you will see that I am telling nothing but the truth when I say that he whom the Lord brings thus far possesses this love. Those whom God brings to this state are, I think, generous and royal souls; they are not content with loving anything so miserable as these bodies, however beautiful they be and however numerous the graces they possess. If the sight of the body gives them pleasure they praise the creator, but as for dwelling upon it for more than just a moment—no! . . .

Do you ask again by what they are attracted if they do not love things they see? They do love what they see and they are greatly attracted by what they hear; but the things which they see are everlasting. If they love anyone they immediately look right beyond the body . . . fix their eyes on the soul and see what there is to be loved in that. If there is nothing, but they see any suggestion or inclination which shows them that, if they dig deep, they will find gold within this mine, they think nothing of the labour of digging, since they have love. There is nothing that suggests itself to them which they will not willingly do for the good of that soul, since they desire their love for it to be lasting, and they know quite well that is impossible unless the loved one has certain good qualities and love for God. I really mean that it is impossible, however great their obligations and even if that soul were to die for love of them and do them all the kind actions in its power; even if it had all the natural graces joined in one, their wills would not have strength enough to love it nor would they remain fixed on it.

## II. BOSSUET

### The love of God and of the neighbour

#### 1. *Christ demands unity in his name:*

Augustine says, and with reason, that there is nothing so peaceful and so ferocious as man, nothing so sociable by nature and so apt to discord through his vices than he. Made for peace, he breathes the very air of war. A spirit of dissension and hostility has become mixed up with humanity and has destroyed the peace of the world. Neither laws, nor reason, nor authority are capable of preventing confidence from feeling perpetual fear and friendship from being uncertain; suspicions are rife, envy, cruelty, malice in the guise of adulation, enmities are implacable.

Christ, in his Gospel, is radically opposed to such things and imposes harmony between men by the 'three' essential precepts which comprehend the most radical obligations of our social life with others. First he demands that we be one, in his name . . . his second command refers to fraternal correction and the third to the forgiving of injuries (Matt. 18. 20 ff.).



2. *Human love needs a solid foundation—God:*

In spite of this spirit of division, there is always within us a tendency to friendship, from which comes the pleasure of conversation and the company of other men. From this we can understand that the power which has been divided up by human nature between various individual men does not separate us in such a way that there is not at the same time a secret spirit of unity which attracts us. Therefore we have always something common between us all, and we can prove this if we remember that it is not merely sorrow which makes us seek comfort and support from others, but also joy—which one would imagine sufficient of itself—seeks the bosom of a friend to confide in him and without this it is insipid and imperfect. Nothing is pleasing to a man without a friend with whom to share it, says Augustine.

Since this natural desire for company is not widespread, since it is normally confined to those who please us; since also it is not sufficiently cordial, being built up on some advantage to ourselves; and since it is not sufficiently strong, because our affection is a wavering thing, God desires to give us something higher and more solid.

He has ordained that charity and love should depend on him as on their First Principle and that from him they should spread to all those who are of a similar nature to our own. Even when we have particular friends, the bonds which unite us must come from this same Principle, without whom there can be no true, solid friendship.

3. *Love, the compendium of justice:*

To fulfil the two laws of charity we must understand two things; under whose rule we must live and with whom. We live under the supreme rule of God, and we must live under that rule in sanctity. To do this we must be at peace with others, for which reason we must love them for God's sake, for which reason our love for one another must be mutual.

4. *God, the sole foundation of the love of the neighbour:*

(a) the love of God:

In accordance with this doctrine it is easy to see that the first commandment of the love of God is the only foundation for that of the love of the neighbour. Who does not see that, to love him as we love ourselves, it is necessary to desire and procure for him the same good which we desire for ourselves? And to rise to that pure disposition of soul it is first of all necessary to free our hearts from particular good in order to fix them on the common good of all. To achieve this we have to fix our eyes on God alone, the only thing which can satisfy all mankind with his abundance, and whom we possess more when we share him with others, especially when we try to make others share in him as we do. On the contrary, he who

does not love God, no matter what he may say or how much he may promise, will only succeed in loving himself, nor will any love he has for others be more than egoism, it will not be pure, disinterested or sufficiently warm for us to have much faith in it.

(b) the love for ourselves:

If this is exaggerated it forms a barrier between us and others—including God. Our self-love is the great obstacle to the real love of others (2 Tim. 3. 2-3). The law demands that we love others as ourselves, but our self-love prevents this, since we do not consider others as our equals, but as our inferiors; in other words, it causes us to love our neighbour *for* ourselves, not *as* ourselves. Man will never be capable of loving others as he loves himself until he has won the victory over self-love, by loving God more than he loves himself.

The true love for our neighbour always keeps pace with our love for God, in which it has its principle and from which it takes its being . . . and since God is so little loved it is only logical that the prophet should say that it is impossible to trust anyone. We live, he says, in the midst of deceits and frauds, all lack confidence and try to deceive one another; there is no longer any honest man (Cf. Jerem. 9. 4-5; Mich. 7. 2-5).

Yet from this exalted source from which charity takes its origin comes the fact that it should also extend with generosity to all our neighbours, with a universal desire to do them good, using to that end all the powers which God has given us. From this same principle should spring our particular friendships, which will never be inviolable or sacred unless God is in the midst of them. Jonathan and David called their friendship God's alliance, and thus neither the throne nor their ambitions were able to separate them. Happy the man who finds a similar treasure; well may he despise the riches of this world, because a friendship which bears God's seal and is sworn between his hands has no need to fear deceit or treachery. All goes on under the eyes of him who sees the secrets of hearts and his eternal truth is the guarantee of the faith which is pledged in the midst of those changes with which time and human interests threaten other friendships. Such a friend as this, faithful both to God and men, is a treasure beyond esteem and should be more dear to us than our very eyes, because often we see better through his than through our own. He is able to make us see things clearly when our own interests tend to blind us to the truth.

### III. EUGENE BOYLAN, O.C.R.

(Some extracts from "Union with Christ in Our Neighbour," from his book *This Tremendous Lover*.)

There can, therefore, be no true union with God unless we love also our neighbour. First of all, our neighbour is a member of the

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body of Christ and we do not truly love Christ if we do not also love the members of Christ. Secondly, Christ delivered himself for each of his members, and we, ourselves, cannot be united to Christ unless we share in his love for them. That is why he lays upon us the tremendous obligation to love one another as he has loved us. We call it tremendous because he loved us to the extent of laying down his life for us.

At first sight this seems to be an intolerable burden and an impossible obligation. But the service of God is a reasonable service, and he himself has assured us that his yoke is easy and his burden light. If we examine this precept of love we shall find that the obligation, while extensive, is by no means insupportable. . . . Further, we should not think that though we are bound to *love* all, we are not bound to *like* anyone. It is true that our likes and dislikes can be offences against charity, in so far as they are wilful and inordinate; but there are many natural causes which produce a sympathy or antipathy for which we are not responsible. What we are responsible for is to see that these natural likes and dislikes do not interfere with the discharge of the obligations that justice and charity impose upon us in regard to our neighbour....  $\lambda\lambda'\epsilon$  are bound to love all men. To love, in this context, means to wish well to all men. Therefore our charity must be sincere and interior, and we must will all men good equally, in so far as we must will them all salvation. In practice this means that we must not exclude anyone, friend or enemy, from our prayers, and that in a case of necessity we should be ready to give them any help that is essential for them and which may be in our power....

This love of charity must be supernatural. We do not satisfy our Lord's new commandment by a natural love. It must be supernatural in its principle and in its nature. We must love our neighbour for God and according to God. As the *Imitation of Christ* says: That seems often to be charity which is rather natural affection; because our own natural inclination, self-will, hope of reward, desire of our own interest, will seldom be wanting.. ..

The faults of the tongue are innumerable, and it is noteworthy that even in people who are otherwise quite virtuous one often finds an uncharitable tongue. There is a wide field here for the practice of virtue and the quest for holiness. So much so that the Holy Ghost tells us by the pen of St James: If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. Let us remember that every word we utter or every insinuation we make to the detriment of our neighbour is an injury done to Christ. . . . The Christian man does his best to hide the faults of others, and will not listen to detraction. If detraction is wrong, calumny is still worse. And even quite good people do not seem to realize the responsibility they have for every single word they say about anyone else.... Our neighbour's honour

and good name, his professional reputation and personal character, should be as safe in our mouth as in our Lord's. And it must be remembered that this is true even though we know that his private behaviour does not justify his public reputation. . . . But all tale-bearing and mischief-making, all imprudent revelations of another's secret, all sowing of discord or exciting of suspicion are quite wrong, and are altogether incompatible with a true life in Christ. Not only do we separate ourselves from him in the doing of these injuries, but we widen the breach inasmuch as those injuries are done to him. We make public the very sins of which he has taken the shame upon himself.

The really spiritual man is known by the kindness of his speech and still more by the kindness of his silence. He is always ready to find pity and sympathy for everyone. To understand all is to forgive all, and no man who knows his own weakness and his own complete dependence upon God's grace in the avoiding of sin, can ever be harsh with the faults of his neighbour....

One often forgets that our principal duty to our neighbour is a supernatural one, and that the principal way of satisfying that duty is also a supernatural one. The most destitute man in the world is the man in a state of mortal sin. He cannot rise out of his sin without the help of grace, which he cannot merit strictly for himself. The greatest work then of fraternal charity is that by which grace is obtained from God for those who are in mortal sin. And grace is only obtained by a spiritual life. The greatest service we can render our neighbour is to sanctify ourselves. In doing so, we become, if not a power house, at least a transformer station in the network of the distribution of grace. . . .

This principle of Christian charity, according to which Christ is replaced by his members, will be of extensive service in sanctifying the daily routine for those who wish to live a better and a higher life. Our Lord can always be found in our neighbour and loved and served in him. . . . Every single thing we do during the day, which is according to the will of God, can be used to bring down grace on men. The more anything runs contrary to our own will, the more closely does it resemble the Cross by which Christ redeemed men. By willingly accepting such a share of the Cross when he sends it to us, we lighten his load, and bring down his grace on men.

## SECTION VI. PAPAL TEXTS

### Practical love for the Church

I. We . . . will follow our King of peace, who taught us to love not only those of another people or race not our own, but even our very



enemies. We, our hearts inspired with the tender sentiment of the Apostle of the Nations, will join him in extolling the length and breadth and height and depth of the charity of Christ, a charity which no difference of race or custom can divide, no tracts of ocean diminish, no war, just or unjust, destroy.

In this grave hour, when pain is racking so many bodies and sorrow rending so many hearts, the world must be enkindled to this supernatural charity, so that all good men (we have in our thoughts especially charitable institutions of every kind) may pool their resources to meet these gigantic spiritual and material needs, in an admirable competition of pity and love. So will the whole world be witness of the active generosity and the inexhaustible fecundity of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

2. . . . We would have all who acknowledge the Church as their Mother carefully consider that not only the sacred ministers, not only those who have dedicated themselves to God in the religious life, but also in their measure the other members of the Mystical Body of Christ, are under an obligation to work zealously and energetically for the building and increase of that body. We wish this to be especially realized—as in fact, to their honour it is realized—by those militant members of Catholic Action who are co-operating with Bishops and priests in the work of the apostolate, and by the members of auxiliary pious associations which work to the same end. It is evident that under present conditions this untiring activity of theirs is of the first and highest importance. . . .

3. . . . Imitating this example of Christ, let us daily pray our Lord of the harvest that he may send forth labourers into his harvest; and let our common pleading rise daily to heaven for all the members *of* the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. First, for the Bishops entrusted each with the care of his own diocese; and then for priests and religious who, called to the service of God, are engaged, whether in their own country or in foreign lands among the heathen, in protecting, increasing and promoting the kingdom of the Divine Redeemer. But let no member of this venerable Body be forgotten in the common prayer; and especially let remembrance be made of those who are either oppressed with the pains and sufferings of this earthly life, or after death are being purified in expiatory flames. Nor should our petition omit those who are being instructed in Christian doctrine, that they may as soon as possible be cleansed in the waters of baptism (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*).

## SERMON 5

### SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

#### I. LITURGICAL

##### A: Our Meeting with the Good Samaritan

###### Modern application of the parable

I. The best way of understanding and assimilating the Gospel is to give it an application round the Mass and Communion. This is the purpose of the present scheme.

2. It is not possible, in the case of the present parable, to do this with all its elements—but with some, yes.

###### The wounded man

i. When we assist at Mass it is convenient to do so as if we were the wounded man in the parable:

(a) we also have fallen into the hands of robbers, the enemies of the soul—the devil, the world and the flesh;

(b) we have been robbed by them of sanctifying grace, or at least the fervour of our charity<sup>7</sup> has been weakened, while at the same time we have lost many actual graces through them;

(c) we have received innumerable wounds; venial sins, imperfections, tepidity, increase in the onslaughts of the passions, etc.;

(d) we are often half-dead; not dead altogether, but at least much weakened.

2. Our main wounds can be reduced to two—concupiscence and self-love. They are the two sources of infection which cause many sins and imperfections in us.

###### The Good Samaritan

i. The Fathers of the Church see in the Good Samaritan a figure of Christ.

2. Christ knows our weakness and in compassion he comes on our altars every day to supply a remedy.

It is the same Christ who was compassionate and merciful with the sinners and the sick all his life on earth; the Christ of the healing miracles, the Christ who ‘had compassion on the multitude’, the Christ who opened the gates of paradise to the good thief on the cross at his side. He is here, on the altar at Mass and in Communion.

###### He cures our wounds

I. Like the Samaritan in the parable, Christ on our altars takes on himself our weakness, makes it his own, satisfies for it and heals it.

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Among the many fruits of the Mass we find this one of satisfaction for sin.

2. He heals our wounds, above all those of concupiscence and self-love.

(a) The Mass has a special value, especially if united with our communion.

(b) The postcommunion prayer in today's Mass stresses this—that not only does the Eucharist purify us from our sins, but it also restores our powers, helping them to fight more efficiently against our enemies, especially against the desires of our fallen nature.

(c) The Mass demands from each one who shares in it the handing over of his will and heart—it is not a mere passive assistance at the sacrifice of Christ. This offering of oneself has a great psychological value, as well as a religious one.

Blessed are the eyes . . .

1. If the Old Testament was unto death (as today's Epistle tells us), the New is a ministry of the spirit and of life.

The synagogue was incapable of healing the wounds of human nature; we have the joy of belonging to the Mystical Body of Christ, the Good Samaritan. For this reason we can repeat the words of Christ in all truth: Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see.

2. Full of this joy, we can praise God in the words of the Gradual, and our praise will rise always to him, especially if we show our gratitude in a practical way by frequenting the Sacrifice of the Mass; every day more convinced of the value of the medicine which it can give to us.

B: The Communion of Saints

Moses prayed, and God's anger was appeased

The Offertory of today's Mass recalls the intercession of Moses in favour of the people of Israel (fragments of Exod. 32):

(a) the people had persuaded Aaron to make the golden calf for them while Moses was receiving the Law on Mt Sinai;

(b) God was angry' with them for their sin—they were a stiff-necked race;

(c) Moses pleads with God for the people, reminding him of the Patriarchs to whom he had sworn alliance;

(d) God's anger is appeased at the prayer of Moses.

The saints' power of intercession

i. It is not merely consoling for the Christian to plead for the intercession of our Lady and the saints; it is also a necessity.



2. The blessed in heaven cannot pray for themselves, because they lack nothing, since they are in the eternal glory and happiness of God; but they do plead for us, this prayer being a fruit of their abounding love for God and their neighbour—charity in an eminent degree. That is why we should seek their help eagerly, as being a powerful source of graces.

### One for another

1. Not merely should those on earth seek the help of those in heaven; between those of us who still dwell on earth there should be a bond of solidarity which is so great that we pray one for another.

(a) We must ask in prayer, says St Thomas, that which we should desire. And we must desire, not merely good things for ourselves, but also for others, because this belongs to the very essence of love, that love which we owe to our neighbour. Thus charity demands that we pray one for another.

(b) Above all, priests, apostles, contemplatives, should plead for all those who make up the Mystical Body of Christ.

2. St Paul did this frequently (cf. Col. 1. 9; 4. 12; 2 Thess. 1. 11; Ephes. 6. 17-19).

### One body with Christ

1. The dogma of the Mystical Body is the foundation of this communion of saints, through which the prayer of one benefits another (Rom. 12. 4-6).

2. In Christ, the Church militant, triumphant and suffering forms one Body.

(a) There is a constant stream of influence going back and forth between these elements of the Body. Leaving aside for the moment the Church in purgatory, we can say that:

i. the saints cannot be indifferent to our struggle; they are concerned with it and help us in it before the throne of God. Thus they co-operate in the work of our redemption and salvation;

ii. as Christ before the Father presents his own merits and applies them to us, so they, united with Christ, are also actors in the drama of redemption;

iii. each and every act of love, be it on earth or in heaven; every prayer and sacrifice, is shared in by those who still fight on earth;

iv. Christ has willed to those who are now confirmed in grace, sanctity and glory, the power to help in the work of redemption.

(b) For this same reason there is a similar communication of prayers and merits between the members of the Church militant.

### Individualism and Christianity

1. There is nothing so opposed to the true spirit of Christianity as individualism, a shutting up of oneself in one's own ego without heeding the needs of others or without bothering about one's neighbour.

- (a) Each Christian is united with all those who are baptized;
- (b) united also to the blessed in heaven.

2. This truth is often forgotten—we must meditate on it and live it.

(a) Many times we approach God and feel unworthy; but we should remember our union with all that is holy in the Church. We can then say to the Lord: Consider not my sins and offences, but look at the faith and love of thy Church—that of Peter, of James and John, of Thomas Aquinas, St Francis, etc.

(b) Thus we can pray, through the saints, for all who live in communion with us and within the unity of the Mystical Body;

(c) also for those who are as yet outside that unity, but who form that group of 'other sheep', who will one day, by his grace, come into the Church of Christ.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### A: Confidence in Christ (i)

#### False confidence

In the writings of St Augustine we find frequent reference to confidence in Christ—but the right kind of confidence.

We have the wrong kind of confidence, according to him, when we trust in our own powers, or when we trust in Christ in such a way that we do not think that we need to do anything—he is sufficient for us.

#### True confidence

##### 1. *The Catholic doctrine on this point is:*

We trust in Christ who has merited justification for us (in our person), and has given us the grace to merit heaven.

##### 2. *Justification is not a mere external thing:*

It implies an interior sanctification, a personal and individual application of the merits of Christ.

##### 3. *And who is the cause of this?*

- (a) God, whose mercy has reached out to us all;
- (b) as meritorious cause, Christ our Lord, who through his love for us, became man and merited it for us, as one with us.

## SERMON SCHEMES

4. *This explains why our hope and confidence are so firm and certain:*

(a) God does not do things by halves, and he will give us the means to attain the happiness of heaven;

(b) Christ gave himself to death for us—and in whom can we have greater trust than in one who has done so much for us? The love demonstrated in such an act of self-sacrifice demands this confidence.

(c) He has given us the Holy Spirit—our confidence has its basis in this presence in us of God himself.

5. Our good works take their value from this fact that Christ is with and in us, that what we do (in a state of grace) he does with us; he and I are one.

## Epistle to the Romans

1. To complete the picture we need to read and to study with attention the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, chap. 5.

2. Also the doctrine of Christ, in which he identifies himself with us, John, chaps. 14-17.

## B : Confidence in Christ (2)

### Relation to the former scheme

There we saw the general basis for our confidence in Christ, now we must explain it in more detail.

### Two contrasting opinions

When Lainez pronounced his famous discourse in the Council of Trent he pointed out the two contrasting opinions, the Catholic and the Protestant, in this example:

(a) according to the Protestants:

We are like the soldier in the story, to whom the king's son said: I give you neither horse nor armour. Therefore do not fight; at the hour of victory they will reward you because I have fought.

(b) according to the Catholic opinion:

We are like that other soldier to whom the king's son said: Here is a good horse and arms. Fight bravely, and I will fight at your side, afterwards my Father will give you the same reward as he gives to me.

## Presumption

I. To trust that Christ will save us without our co-operation is to presume on the goodness of God and almost to blaspheme against his might, denying his justice and his goodness.



2. It is silly to suppose that God gives us laws and commandments without also wishing that they should be fulfilled.

3. It would be an unjust thing to chastise any offence against them unless such were the case.

4. Faith is only a beginning; there must be good works as well. Faith increases our responsibilities in this matter, because our knowledge is increased.

5. To attain the inheritance of heaven it is necessary to become sharers in Christ's passion, St Paul tells us.

(a) This is the very root of our confidence in Christ—the fact that we are one with him; we have to be other Christs in the world, then Christ will help us as if we were acting in his own name and person, as we really are.

(b) Christ learnt obedience through the things he had to do and suffer, as Paul tells us once again (Phil. 2. 5). Christ first obeys, then saves others through his obedience.

(c) To trust in him without first obeying the law is to trust in vain. That is why Paul likens life on earth to a race in which the athletes have to do the best they can, and the best wins the prize (1 Cor. 9. 24-26).

### The commandments are possible

1. The objection could be submitted that trust in Christ is prevented by the wall of the commandments, which are difficult—if not impossible—and good works.

2. *There is a fallacy here:*

(a) Original sin has weakened our nature, it is true, but at our side we have Christ, who has won for us both the victory and the help necessary to attain it.

(b) The Council of Trent warns us that the Fathers of the Church have always condemned the idea that the commandments of God ask an impossibility of fallen man.

(c) How could a just and a merciful God punish an offence against something which is impossible? How could he reproach us who told the Pharisees that he had not come to extinguish the smoking flax, but to breathe softly on it so that it should burst into the full flame of divine love?

3. The Council, quoting Augustine, says that God does not command the impossible; he asks us to do what we can and ask for the grace to do that which is difficult for us, helping us all the time by his grace so that we may be capable of fulfilling his commands.

(a) Some of the British Troops in the last war had this saying for their motto: What is difficult we do at once; what is impossible takes a little longer! That should be our slogan also.

(b) our weakness has a remedy; in petition:

i. if the unjust judge in the Gospel ends by listening to the petitioner who worries him constantly; if we who are 'evil' do not give stones in the place of bread; how much more will not God do, when these are his very own parables?

ii. he will also give us his help that we may ask for those things which we really need. The commandments of one whose yoke is sweet and whose burden is light are not heavy or impossible!

iii. or again, we might remember that he who imposed them knew full well the burden they would mean to fallen nature; yet he still imposes them! He also tells all those who are burdened, to call on him!

(c) St Paul complained of his temptations—but he also received the reply: My grace is sufficient for thee. Did he not die to merit that grace for us? Is he going to be miserly in its distribution?

(d) The grace of Christ is more abundant now than before the fall of man. Even so, our weakness is great; but Christ has taken it into consideration. Is he not the Christ of mercy—of the parable of the prodigal son; the one *ἀντίο* forgave the woman taken in adultery?

### Perseverance

1. Grace makes it possible that God never abandons us, although we may try to abandon him.

2. Even perfection and salvation become possible for all—dare we say easy?—through the grace of God. All should place their most firm hope in their salvation through the helps which God has given us. Just as he began the good work, so he will carry it through to the end, provided man does not cease to co-operate with grace.

### Confidence and fear

1. Both are human sentiments and both can exist at the same time in man. The fear we mention here is that which thinks of our own weakness, one which moves us to pray and trust. It is the fear of the child who is afraid that he may fall, and so takes his mother's hand and continues to walk on in confidence.

2. Those who think they are safe should be careful lest they fall; they should look to their salvation in fear and trembling; work hard for it all the time, remembering that they have received the hope of salvation and glory, but have not yet attained that goal.

## III. THE GOSPEL

A: Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see . . .

### Introduction

i. Today's Gospel opens with this phrase of Christ.

2. To what does it refer ?

(a) The disciples had returned joyfully from their first apostolic mission—that is the first reason for the remark;

(b) it also has a connection with what follows; they are blessed because they are going to hear the doctrine of mercy and charity explained by our Lord.

#### What the just of the Old Law wished to see

I. Christ—the point on which all the old Law converges:

(a) Abraham wished to see 'his day' (John 8. 56);

(b) Jacob expressed his hope in the Saviour whom the Lord had promised to send (Gen. 49. 18);

(c) the desires of the just in the Old Law are summed up in the verses of Isaias used in the Liturgy of Advent: You heavens, send dew from above, you skies, pour down upon us the rain we long for, him, the Just One; may he, the Saviour, spring from the closed womb of earth, and with him let right order take its being (Isaias 45. 8).

2. Yet these ardent desires were not fulfilled in their lifetime; they saw the Messiah only by faith.

(a) It was faith they lived by, all of them, and in faith they died; for them the promises were not fulfilled, but they looked forward to them and welcomed them at a distance, owning themselves no better than strangers and exiles on earth (Heb. 11. 13);

(b) even though they knew Christ by faith, the revelation of the Old Law was but a shadow and a figure of that of the New. It did not reveal everything about the person and the doctrine of the Messiah, nor the full splendour of the work of redemption.

#### What the disciples saw

1. Happier than the kings and princes of old, the disciples saw Christ and heard his words. They are of greater dignity and constitute the foundation of the Church of Christ.

2. They were more blessed even than the Jews who lived at the same time.

All of them saw and heard Christ; but not all of them contemplated the Messiah with the eyes of faith, nor heard his words in the spirit of obedience—they did not wish to see and hear like that.

#### What all Christians see

1. Especially blessed are all the disciples of Christ, all Christians.

2. More so than all the people who lived under the Old Law:

(a) We have the fullness of revelation;

(b) because of the fact that Christ has now come;



(c) the work of redemption is accomplished;

(d) we have the guarantee of a Church which will remain for all time, and which in the course of her history is now more abundant in fruits of sanctity than before.

3. The true disciple of Christ is more blessed than many others, who see and hear the Church and the works of faith, but who do not wish to believe :

(a) happier than pagans, who still live in the darkness;

(b) happier than those who lived at the time of Christ and who did not wish to believe in his teaching, in spite of the fact that they saw him with the eyes of the body. Christ has proclaimed the happiness of those who have believed without such vision (John 20. 29).

### What those see who are called to a religious or priestly vocation

1. They are in a position to see and hear the Saviour more clearly than others :

(a) they consecrate themselves to him ;

(b) they know him in the wonderful works he performs in the souls of those whom they have to tend.

2. *Conclusion:*

These are the treasures which constitute the object of our admiration when we see ourselves in Christ:

(a) may they be ever more and more understood and penetrated by the eye of faith ;

(b) producing daily greater fruit in our lives ;

(c) may we one day contemplate him face to face in heaven.

### B : The Parable

#### The wounded man

i. *We do not know who he was—only that he was a traveller:*

(a) Man on this earth is also a traveller. All other creatures have been made for earth ; only man is made for heaven, towards which he is travelling.

(b) But in this journey he is subject to a thousand and one necessities, some spiritual and others material—of this earth.

i. If he cannot find the means of satisfying the former he will not reach his promised land—heaven. That is why he needs instruction in Christian doctrine and all the other means of sanctification and perseverance;

ii. but if he cannot find means to satisfy his earthly needs, it will also be difficult for him to attain heaven;

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iii. man, to keep the law of God, needs a minimum of material well-being; that is the basis of the Catholic social doctrine in its theological application.

2. *He fell into the hands of robbers:*

(a) Some robbed him of his spiritual patrimony, heresies, bad literature, corruption of morals, his faith was attacked and his whole spiritual life.

(b) Others robbed him of his just wages (necessary for his material life), thinking that any salary imposed by law or custom was sufficient; they robbed him of his right to the fruits of the earth, as the Creator had imposed those rights. There were other robbers who were not so guilty—illness, suffering of all kinds, misfortunes of life, material catastrophes, scarcity of raw materials, etc.

3. How many there are in even' town who are fallen by the wayside, robbed of their spiritual and material necessities!

Those who pass by without heeding the sick man

1. *A priest and a Levite:*

The very people to whom the care of such needy souls had been commended. In the New Law those who are charged with the spiritual care of such wounded people are still the priests; those in charge of his material welfare are the rich and powerful.

2. *They pass by:*

That is, they take no heed, they are not worried about the state of the wounded man. They are intent on their own affairs, without thought for others.

3. *Why do we pay no heed to the poor?*

(a) Through pride:

The mere fact that we say there will always be poor, seems to justify us in our own eyes, raising between us a wall which it is difficult to overcome. They are another class of people from us; we do not feel any bond between them and us. Authority is always inclined to this fault, forgetting that all authority is supposed to be used for the benefit of those who are governed, rather than for the benefit of those who administer power.

(b) Through avarice:

We can give no more, people say—yet if they would deprive themselves of some *luxury* the essential needs of the poor might well be met.

i. We can give no more; but they have themselves placed a limit on what they *think* they can give, without giving until it hurts and without understanding that God is the Lord and we the administrators of his goods!

ii. Their one aim is to gain all they can at all costs—without thinking of the means and the fact that those means might be unlawful before God. Self is the great enemy here.

(c) Repugnance:

Let us confess it—the poor have little or no education, they are dirty, careless, unprovident at times; but they are still poor! The poor of Christ, identified with him in a special way, in spite of their vices (many of which come from the fact that we refuse to help them). Sickness, which is always disagreeable; sadness.

(d) Human ingratitude:

But we should remember two things; gratitude or ingratitude of man should not make any difference when it is a question of justice; when charity is the virtue concerned, we should seek the gratitude of God, not that of man.

### The Samaritan

1. He was a Samaritan, and therefore the wounded man was his enemy.

(a) We must help the poor, even though they dislike or even hate us; the hatred or dislike of another does not impede or prevent my obligations towards him;

(b) even if it is unjust anger, Christian charity has Christ for its model, who redeemed us—his enemies—from sin, making us his friends.

(c) The spiritual order does not admit enemies. Even the enemies of the Church may bring punishment on themselves in the form of excommunication, but this very punishment is intended to be a remedy, a medicine.

2. He took charge of the sick man, bound up his wounds and took him to the inn, where he paid for his stay.

Charity is active—not passive; effective in good works. To have the idea that we can help others while keeping our own money intact for ourselves is a delusion.

### C: Those who passed by

#### The priest and Levite passed by the sick man

i. They were about their own business and did not think it opportune to stop and waste time.

(a) They were not necessarily evil occupations—they could even have been sacred ones. Possibly they were going to the temple or coming from it.

(b) If they were coming from the temple they might have urged as an excuse that they were tired and in a hurry to join their families;

if they were going to the temple, they would have the further excuse that they did not wish to arrive late for their sacred duties.

(c) Yet in spite of this the Lord holds them up to us as examples of lack of charity

2. An examination of conscience would show us the great number of times we pass by our neighbour in need, because we are engrossed in our own affairs, possibly pious ones.

3. This lack of care for our neighbour is excused by us, at times from lack of time, urgent business, sometimes even the demands of our life of piety. The true causes are:

- (a) an exaggerated idea of the value of our own business affairs;
- (b) very small interest in our neighbour.

#### The very different example of Christ and the saints

1. Jesus spent all his life in the apostolate—but all the time doing good to others, without thought for himself.

2. St Paul lived a life which was full of activity, yet he found time to organize collections for the poor. The same can be said of all the saints.

3. We, too, do not need much time to ask an interested question about our neighbour.

#### Why do we pass by so often ?

I. The first cause we have mentioned is the over-valuation of the importance of our own affairs.

(a) Nothing is superior in value to charity, which is the very bond of perfection. Love for the neighbour is but an extension and a proof of our love for God.

(b) As proof of this we have the fact that there are times when charity to our neighbour takes pride of place before our obligations towards God. To help our neighbour in real need we may even miss Mass on Sundays, do servile work, etc.

(c) It is an application of Osee (6. 6): Mercy before sacrifice.

(d) St John's argument is well known: how can we dare to say that we love God if we do not love our neighbour? We say that we love God whom we do not see, and we do not love those whom we do see around us. God is in and with them; they are his.

(e) Love proves itself in works, not in words.

2. The second cause is the slight interest we have in the affairs of others.

(a) According to us, what they have is quite enough for them; yet we are never satisfied, no matter how hard they may work for our advantage.



(b) This has its roots in self-love and in lack of charity. There is an intimate connection always between the two.

(c) We place ourselves at the very centre *of* all, drawing all to ourselves and for ourselves; so much so that we see no importance in other things or people around us. The example of the Good Samaritan should teach us a lesson. God himself, the true centre of all things created, took such pity on our miseries that he took on himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2. 7).

(d) Our lack of charity. Not merely in so far as we have no love for our neighbour and refuse to think of him as one with ourselves. We do not even understand the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, of which we all form a part. This is a Body for whose well-being we are all responsible, each one in his own measure.

### Interest in others

If we only understood this doctrine and had a slight interest in those around us, how many misfortunes might we not avoid ?

There are so many ways in which we can help others, simple ways some of them, such as a subscription to an orphanage, old clothes we do not want, books for the missions, the seminary fund, the Lenten Alms box—and a hundred others.

(a) Be interested in those around you, especially in those who are poor and need your help;

(b) show this interest by talking to them at times, by listening to their troubles, by helping when you can. There is nothing better for your spiritual life, and even for your physical and mental health.

### D : A reply to the Jewish people

#### Introduction

1. The parable of the Good Samaritan is the answer to a question put to our Lord : And who is my neighbour ?

2. But the reply of Jesus is universal and for all time, even though he is giving a direct answer to a problem legitimately formulated but falsely solved by the people of the time.

#### The Jewish concept of the neighbour

1. The whole question of their neighbour was a difficult one for the Jews, for many reasons.

2. *Their law and their history, for example:*

(a) When God's people entered the promised land they were forbidden to have contact with the peoples about them. Those tribes practised idolatry and were pagans; the Jews might easily be contaminated by their customs (as in fact they were).

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(b) It was God's will that, if they did not overcome their enemies, at least they should live in isolation from them.

(c) At the present moment it may appear to be an exaggerated measure on the part of God; but the history of the Chosen People shows how necessary it was. Whenever they made such contacts they fell into idolatry.

(d) God then had to take stern measures to make his people return to the way of truth.

3. *Their geographical position made it difficult for them:*

(a) They lived in a land which was geographically isolated, among mountains and the sea on one side;

(b) thus the people lived exclusively for the purpose of keeping the true faith and their religious traditions.

4. *The results of all this:*

(a) a narrow idea of the neighbour;

(b) all Jews were brothers, but they did not extend this feeling to foreigners.

5. *The later happenings in Jewish history:*

(a) in the captivity this union between the Jews became even more pronounced;

(b) the same is true of the time of the wars of independence, under the Machabees;

(c) the Roman dominion—at the very time of the birth of Jesus. They could not think of these oppressors as brothers, but instead looked for the coming of a Messiah who would free his people from their yoke.

6. Therefore this doctor of the Law asks Jesus this question, not to catch him, but looking for something which would clarify this problem.

### The universal mission of the Jewish people

1. *They had the mission of guarding the messianic traditions:*

But instead of doing this as they ought, they kept the messianic privilege for themselves.

2. *What is more, Israel received the whole of the New Law:*

(a) Christ limited his preaching to them, just as he was born of their blood and race;

(b) Israel was to communicate to the world the New Law of the Messiah. From them the apostles are chosen, who were told to teach all nations (Matt. 28. 19).

3. *The Jewish people had been steadily prepared for this mission:*

(a) They had the truth, universal, valid for all time; intended for all nations;

(b) in spite of its isolation, it was at the centre of the civilized world of the time, with Jerusalem the meeting point for the commerce of East and West. Communications with Antioch and Alexandria were easy;

(c) in their law they saw it written: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. 19. 18), but they understood by the neighbour one's friends. The concept had to be extended.

### The reply of Jesus

1. The answer is in the form of a parable, the doctrinal content of which is: Your neighbour is man—any man.

(a) Any man—even though he may be a stranger or foreigner.

(b) Jesus gives as a model one who, in the opinion of the Jews, was an outcast; there was such animosity between the two classes that not even a glass of water could pass between them (John 4. 9).

2. The reply of Jesus has been hard to accept for the Doctor of the Law, but at least it made him confess that the Samaritan acted rightly.

(a) He did not like it:

As we see from his answer he would not use the words 'the Samaritan', but: 'He who showed mercy to him'.

(b) a hard parable:

It goes to show that neither the priest or the Levite, those who should have possessed greater holiness than other Jews, were aware of the meaning of the precept of charity—they take a lower place than the Samaritan.

3. *Conclusion:*

The universality of love; the wider our hearts become in this sense, the nearer we shall be to the law of Christ.

### E: Christ, our Good Samaritan

#### Introduction

1. Jesus gives us a description of himself in today's parable.

2. He is the Good Samaritan, who shows man an admirable divine mercy.

#### He drew near to man

1. Man, through sin, was lying at the edge of the road, stripped of all his riches in the supernatural order.

2. *Jesus drew near:*

(a) By his incarnation:

This demands the whole of divine wisdom, mercy and knowledge—God takes a nature like ours, unites it to his Person.

(b) He drew near even in the way he wished to show himself to the world :

- i. eating with the poor, with sinners, those in need ;
- ii. a life of a worker, of humility and meekness;
- iii. selecting from the humble his apostles, to whom he would confide his mission.

#### He dressed his wounds

1. *The many wounds man had received through sin:*

- (a) deprived of sanctifying grace, the life of the soul;
- (b) deprived of the light of the intellect which could illuminate his mind concerning the things of God and also those which referred to men;
- (c) the weakening of his will; he placed his heart in creatures, separating it from his Creator; the will follows the indications of the intellect, it is a blind faculty; it is led away by concupiscence;
- (d) his body subject to death and misery ;
- (e) his appetites weakened in so far as the control of reason is concerned, following his desires.

2. *Christ binds up these wounds and gives us remedies for them:*

- (a) sanctifying grace won for us on the cross ;
- (b) the word of God returns to its former purity<sup>7</sup> and is increased by his revelation ;
- (c) he strengthens our will through hope and by supernatural charity which makes us love God's plans for us;
- (d) he taught us, by his example, that death is a step towards life ;
- (e) the evils of this life, after the death of Christ, have an important part to play in the development of the spiritual life. They are means to greater merit.

#### He poured in oil and wine

1. *The oil of divine mercy:*

Applied by the sacraments, wiping away sin and giving strength to do good in the supernatural order.

2. *Sweetness mixed with harshness:*

These are the oil and wine with which the Saviour treats us and cures us. He forgives us, but at the same time he imposes a penance on us; he allows us to feel at one and the same time his consolations and the lack of them; he chastises and consoles us at one and the same time.

3. *They represent the word of God in Holy Scripture:*

- (a) there we find the kind, gentle truths which give us consolation and hope ;



(b) also the terrible truths which wound the sinner and make him tremble with fear.

### Putting him on his beast

1. *In taking our nature he has raised us to God's level:*

(a) taking on him our sins;

(b) which he did in the way which best suited the dignity of man, taking man to himself in one Mystical Body.

2. *Each day Jesus takes on himself four works:*

He is at the side of the road, saying to each of us: Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you (Matt. 11. 28).

3. *He lifts up us with his example:*

Of perfect obedience to the Father, of humility, of meekness; of all virtue.

### He took him to an inn

1. Christ, after man's redemption, ascended into heaven.

2. But he has left man in the inn of the Church, in which he will find all the medicines necessary to heal him, to bring him back to perfect health.

3. At times Christ even takes the sinner, whom he has converted from a life of crime, and places him in the religious life or even in the priesthood. He then becomes an object of special love on the part of Christ.

### And said to the inn-keeper . . .

1. Christ has confided our care to his Vicar on earth, to the bishops and priests.

2. *For this purpose he gives them money:*

(a) a triple authority;

(b) knowledge and virtue, sanctifying grace and others which are destined for the people;

(c) the power of orders and jurisdiction;

(d) he suggests that they should add to all they have to do of obligation other words of mercy for souls.

### F: The conduct of the Good Samaritan

#### Who was the fallen man ?

1. *He was not a Samaritan^ as some have thought:*

The Gospel does not say that. The parable would lose a lot of its force if he were.

(a) He was a man—any man. It is a universal lesson, one which applies to us too.

(b) Today the idea of unity among the members of the human race is felt as never before. Neither religion, race, colour, nation nor culture makes any difference—they are all men, one with us, our brothers, to be loved equally.

## 2. *The very substance of religion:*

(a) Once more Christ gives us an example of the very substance of religion—love of God and of our neighbour;

(b) but the idea of the Pharisees, who put all the emphasis on externals, will always remain in the world.

## Two prayers rejected

1. There are two prayers of the Pharisees which are rejected in the Gospel parables, one in a chapter of St Luke, the other in the Gospel of today.

(a) The Pharisee of whom St Luke speaks (chap. 18) was condemned because he prayed badly; he had no real humility, but pride of heart.

(b) We are not sure whether the priest and the Levite of today's parable prayed badly, but they certainly did not act as they should have done. They might have left the temple without condemnation, but they did not please God in their prayer. They did not receive grace; their prayer was not accepted.

2. The first Pharisee was condemned for his pride; these for their lack of charity after their prayer.

## Prayer should breed charity

*Good prayer necessarily breeds charity in the soul:*

(a) Through the heart we enter into contact with God—and God is love.

(b) Good prayer is an act of love for God; cold intellectual thought, even though it be concerned with divine things, is not prayer—it is possible to write a whole treatise on theology without ten minutes prayer. It is one thing to penetrate into divine things coldly and with the intellect merely; and quite another thing to treat personally with God, the soul full of love for him.

(c) Where there is presence of God, contact with him, lifting of the heart to him, acts of the will by which we speak, either mentally or vocally, to God and the saints, there is true prayer. Good prayer is known by its effects; and the first effect is an increase in charity.

The touchstone of mercy and compassion

1. *imperfect charitable resolutions:*

(a) During prayer some people do make an imperfect resolution concerned with charity—to visit some sick person, give alms to the poor, subscribe to some charitable work.

(b) These small and foreseen works of charity are not a necessary proof of the love of God; at times they are the result of a cold act of the intellect, they can be done for so many reasons, social or otherwise or they can come from natural compassion.

2. *Unforeseen need—the touchstone of charity:*

(a) A much better proof in every way is unforeseen necessity which makes us draw near, something even bodily, to our neighbour; that which demands of us a sacrifice which is both certain and not thought out previously. What is more, it is personal, one which springs spontaneously from our heart, sometimes with apparent imprudence.

(b) In a word, we must try to forget self in order to help others. Charity seeketh not her own... even at times to its own disadvantage.

Analysis of the Samaritan's actions

1. *He saw . . .*

That is the first thing. There are people who do not see the sufferings of others or take heed to their needs.

2. *He stopped . . .*

(a) because he was aware of the need of the wounded man;

(b) the priest saw him, so did the Levite, and both passed by; the Samaritan stopped, and so came to him and helped him.

(c) God has given us eyes to see the needs of others and so that we shall not 'pass them by'.

3. *He took pity on him . . .*

(a) We must learn our union and solidarity with those in need. The Samaritan made the sick man's need his own. This is not mere sentiment or philanthropy.

(b) It is a human act, in which the intellect and will play their parts. It is charity, a virtue.

4. *He drew near to him . . .*

Thus he became more aware of the man's need. We must draw near; it is not enough to try to help others from a long way off. Even physical proximity may be the means to a moral approach.

5. *He helped him . . .*

(a) He gives freely of his time; he gives his attentions, the small remedies he has at hand, such as oil and wine.

(b) He does not then abandon him, but puts him on his own beast—he becomes the wounded man's servant.

(c) He took him to an inn and paid for his stay there. The perfect consummation of a good work.

### The lesson

If a father had found his son lying by the side of the road in these conditions, or if a man found his brother thus, they could not have done more for their loved ones than the Samaritan did.

(a) Yet what he did is simple Gospel teaching. Christ did not say: Love your sons, or your brothers, but: Love your neighbour as yourself.

(b) This is to do the will of our Father who is in heaven.

(c) The Father's will is that we should love one another as he has loved us (John 15).

### G: Christians and reparation

#### Taking care of the wounded man

1. Christ, as our Good Samaritan, took on himself our mortality to cure the wounds of our sins.
2. This is the prophecy of Isaias (53. 5-6, n-12).
3. And St Paul: Christ never knew sin, and God made him into sin for us, so that in him we might be turned into the holiness of God

### The Following of Christ

1. The ideal of every Christian, since we all have to follow in the footsteps of Christ, is to reproduce in our own lives his sentiments and virtues.

(a) What is the attitude of Christians towards the sins of others ?

(b) St Paul tells his converts in Galatia that they must help to bear one another's burdens, and that thus they will fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2).

(c) It is part of the law of Christ (and shows itself in his example) that we must do our best to carry the heavy load of the sins of others.

2. This is an aspect of charity, or perhaps it would be better to say of mercy, which is frequently forgotten.

(a) Faced with the sins of others, the usual reaction is one of bitter comment, strict censure, detraction, a sense of pride in being about to say that we are better than our neighbour.

(b) Without even thinking about it, too many Christians fall almost unconsciously into the sin of the Pharisees—lack of mercy towards others.



3. To carry the sins of others is to be one with Christ, in his work of redemption.

(a) It means considering them as if they were our own, suffering because of them as if we had committed them, satisfying the divine justice for them.

(b) In a word, it is reparation.

### The need for reparation

1. *It is necessary because of the existence of sin:*

(a) In every sin there is a double element, rejoicing in creatures, rebellion against God.

(b) It is not enough to repent; sin takes with it a debt, and that debt has to be paid. If there was joy in committing it, there must be sorrow in repenting for it.

(c) From this comes the need for reparation; there is no repentance without it.

2. *There are many souls who sin and do not make reparation:*

Therefore the need for the Mystical Body to set about this task.

3. *Reparation in the Mystical Body:*

(a) Because of our solidarity, one must come to the help of another.

(b) The illustration of the human body shows us this; if a speck of dust gets into the eye, the hand goes to its help; grafting operations are common today, in which tissue from one body is joined to another—that should be the attitude of the Mystical Body too.

(c) Today Christians do not share their earthly goods to the same extent as in the early days of the Church; but they should share their spiritual wealth.

### Sharers in the redemption of Christ

1. *The Christian who acts in this way has a share in the redemption of Christ:*

(a) Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9. 22).

(b) Christ's passion was entirely effective to repair the damage done through sin, but God has ordained that it should be perpetuated in the other members of his Body.

(c) Every Christian must be able to say that he is nailed to the cross with Christ (Gal. 2. 19-20).

2. *This self-crucifixion together with Christ implies a most sincere love:*

(a) love is the very soul of sacrifice;

(b) mortification, penance, reparation and the cross are not pleasant things in themselves;

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(c) no one crucifies himself because it is a good thing to do so, or enjoyable; but it can and should be done from love for Christ and for the souls which he redeemed.

### Sacrifice yourselves for sinners

1. *This is the reason for certain religious orders—reparation!*

The world is full of those who sin and never make satisfaction; others must do it for them.

2. *Dear God, if only we could understand the honour you do to us in making us sharers in your work of redemption!*

(a) We should ask God for the gift of generosity in self-sacrifice for others;

(b) we should make a special effort on behalf of those near and dear to us, those in despair, in sin, those who are far from God; for all those who should live holy lives and yet whose piety is in danger;

(c) a little—just a little—effort made by each one would have a tremendous effect.

### H: A message of mercy

#### A new message

1. Nowadays it is no longer new because it has been preached so often over the centuries, but when our Lord delivered it he himself called it new' (John 13. 34).

2. The Gospel of today recalls to our minds that 'new commandment' of love and mercy towards our neighbour.

### Mercy and misery

1. Mercy is a virtue which has for its object the misery of another.

2. Every kind of misery comes under the sway of mercy; physical, moral, intellectual; all places and ages, rich or poor, guilty or innocent, private or public calamities.

3. All men have to suffer misery of some kind or another; that is the lot of a man upon this earth (Job 14. 1-3).

(a) It is the duty of mercy to concern itself with them all.

(b) Those who suffer most will be, therefore, the special objects of this virtue.

### Compassion and remedy

1. Mercy has two aspects, that of compassion and that of effective remedy.

2. *Compassion means suffering with someone:*

(a) it implies making their sufferings our own;

(b) it is not mere sentiment or philanthropy;

(c) it takes its origin from a heart which is understanding, tender, full of love for God and the neighbour.

3. *Help for others:*

(a) it is not enough to feel compassion, there must be effective help, as if we were dealing with something which affected us personally;

(b) it is not platonic, but practical and effective;

(c) it takes with it the desire and the will to wipe away the misery of others so far as that is possible in this life—at least to alleviate them.

The message of mercy

1. This name could be given to the whole Gospel; it is the preaching of the New Law of love, the virtue of mercy, especially of divine mercy which was incarnate in Christ, the Son of God.

2. Mercy is certainly a human sentiment, the gentle expression of our sentiments towards those who are like us in nature. Cicero calls it the most religious of all qualities.

3. But Christianity has given to that sentiment a divine splendour. God, who manifests his omnipotence principally by forgiving, has taught us to have mercy on our fellow men and to help them in their miseries. He has told us that we must be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful (Luke 6. 36).

4. On our way through life we shall come across many men who are lying half dead, full of wounds like the man in this story.

(a) He is not a Christian who passes by;

(b) nor is he who takes no heed of this misery;

(c) nor he who limits his help to a word or a look;

(d) even though these may go to church frequently, wear scapulars, belong to confraternities;

(e) it is not Christian because such attitudes lack the very spirit of Christianity;

(f) every Christian has the obligation of being a good Samaritan.

Good Samaritans

1. To bend over the one who is suffering, curing his wounds, taking care of him—that is mercy. As the Samaritan in the story, so: Go and do thou in like manner.

2. *That is the teaching of Christ:*

(a) Christ accepted the help of Simon of Cyrene, even though not willingly given at first; he was grateful for it; witness the conversion of Simon and his family.



(b) If the cross is the inheritance of all Christians, so is this duty of helping others to carry their share of it. Thus and thus only shall we fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2).

## I: The oil of consolation for the sick

### Introduction

#### 1. *Christ has passed through this world:*

(a) healing the sick in body;

(b) curing the sicknesses of the soul. These are even more important than the former, because science has no cure for them.

2. Even when the sick cannot be cured of their bodily ills, it is still possible to pour on them the oil of consolation.

### The sick represent Christ

#### 1. *The fundamental motive for giving them consolation:*

(a) Christ suffered for the sick:

His example as the Man of Sorrows is a great source of consolation; to the sick he might well say: I have given you an example, that you should follow in my steps (John 13. 15).

(b) Christ suffered with the sick:

He gives all the graces necessary to accept the cross and use it for merit and reparation, for the glory of God and the good of the sick.

(c) He suffers in the sick:

i. I was sick and you visited me (Matt. 25. 36).

ii. It is not merely a question of being represented by the sick person—anyone who suffers and is united to the Body of Christ by grace, *is* Christ; Christ is in and with him.

iii. This is true even though the sick person may not be conscious of it; he can still increase in grace through the suffering which he accepts with patience.

iv. But the ideal is that he should appreciate this truth, accept his sufferings in conscious union with Christ and for Christ.

#### 2. *The sick form part of the passion of Christ:*

(a) St Paul: Col. 2. 14, i.e. the merits acquired by Christ through his passion are applied through our sufferings and sacrifices.

(b) Christ has perpetuated his sacrifice and merits in two ways:

i. the mystical sacrifice of his real Body in the Mass;

ii. through the real sacrifice of his Mystical Body. The members of that Body perpetuate and prolong the real sacrifice of Christ; from this comes the value of suffering and sickness. This thought is the most fertile source of consolation.



(c) If Christ at the last judgement will give a reward to those who visited him when he was sick (in the person of others), what prize and reward will he not give to one who has offered his own body to perpetuate in it the redemptive sacrifice?

### The road to sanctity

#### 1. *Sufferings of the sick:*

It is another source of consolation for them to know that their sufferings are a sure road to sanctification.

(a) Experience teaches us this; on many occasions suffering has been the one thing which was able to turn a soul back to God again after a lifetime of sin.

(b) Faith teaches us this truth; suffering, like everything else, comes to us from the hand of a Father who loves us.

(c) Just as Christ won salvation for us by his complete acceptance of suffering because it was his Father's will, so shall we win salvation by the same means.

#### 2. *The exercise of patience:*

(a) the principal virtue to be used in suffering;

(b) St James says that the man who knows how to use this virtue correctly is 'perfect' (James i. 4);

(c) for the illness to be fruitful patience in bearing it must be universal, i.e. we must be ready to accept the illness God wishes to send us, when he wishes it and how, with all the uncomfortable circumstances which may surround it. We must have patience when the remedies overcome the illness and also when they do not.

#### 3. *The prayer of the sick:*

(a) very like that of Christ when he was being crucified;

(b) a prayer of great value and power, because of the patient acceptance of the will of God which accompanies it.

### J: Grace, the medicine for sin

#### Grace in God's plan

1. Theologians tell us that the passage in today's Gospel has given rise to a saying about original sin which sums up its evil effects—man was stripped of grace and wounded in his natural faculties. Just as the man who fell among robbers was stripped and wounded, so the human race was stripped of the gifts God had granted and wounded in its very nature.

2. In the Good Samaritan we can see the help of God who comes to cure our wounds.

3. In the present economy of grace both are evident—man cannot,

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by his natural powers, do anything to procure his salvation, but God supplies that defect by his power and his grace.

Both ideas appear in today's Mass; in the Epistle we are told that our sufficiency comes from God, and in the Collect it is made clear that even the service we give to God is his own gift to us.

### The wounds of original sin

1. The disappearance of the preternatural gifts and the weakness in the natural powers of man.

2. *There are four main wounds left behind by original sin:*

(a) The wound of ignorance in the intellect, which is blinded, impeded on many occasions in its search for the truth, wide open to error in matters of religion and morals;

(b) malice in the will—inclined to evil, easily led into sin through temptation;

(c) weakness in general, which leads man to avoid effort, work, things which are difficult yet necessary' in order to acquire heaven;

(d) concupiscence, which leads us to follow our lower instincts instead of the cold light of reason.

### The healing power of grace

1. *Grace is called Healing and Helping:*

There are two aspects here which need emphasis.

(a) If God, in his providence, allowed man to fall, he is not lacking in power to overcome the effects of that fall. He has not abandoned man in his fall.

(b) He re-established him, giving him power to continue to struggle towards good.

(c) He did not give him back all that he had in the Garden of Eden—at least, not at once—but he did return to man, in the fruits of the Redemption, all the necessary remedies to overcome the wounds inflicted by sin.

2. *Thus:*

(a) He enlightens the mind in its search for truth (Ps. 17. 29);

(b) he gives power to the will—in fact, he gives it an attraction for himself which, as St Augustine says, pulls it almost in spite of itself.

### God with us

Thus there results a magnificent union between ourselves and God in the work of our salvation. He comes to our aid and is in us and with us all the time;

(a) but we have to work with him. It is a joint task, God and ourselves together can do it; but one without the other is useless;

(b) he helps us, but, as Augustine says, he does not force our free will, that must come from us. The very word 'help' gives us the clue to what this means, it implies effort on both sides, God and myself together.

### Come to my aid

1. The Introit of today's Mass gives us this idea: God, come to my aid. It is a prayer which is repeated many times in the official prayers of the Church and the Psalms are full of it, e.g. Ps. 118.35-36.
2. These invocations can be used with profit as ejaculations. We might instruct our faithful to use them frequently during the day as simple prayers which do not take much time but which are very very effective in calling down the blessing of God on our works.

### K: The Good Samaritan—an individual application

#### Three applications

1. The parable of the Good Samaritan offers us three applications in our own lives :
  - (a) the strictly individual—the wounded man is anyone whom we may meet;
  - (b) the social—a whole class of people;
  - (c) the international—a whole nation.
2. *We must not take the parable too literally:*
  - (a) All those we meet in the course of our lives are in some way related to us :
    - i. it may be by blood;
    - ii. through friendship;
    - iii. or in our studies or work.
  - (b) we must not interpret the wounds too literally:
    - i. there are wounds of the soul which do not bleed openly but which are more painful sometimes than physical wounds;
    - ii. there are wounds through injustice, illness, worries, necessity, melancholy, hunger, ingratitude, etc.

### The first field ripe for the harvest—the family

1. The parable has its application in the relations between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants.
2. *Husband and wife:*
  - (a) How many times the poor wife is the one who is wounded and left half dead.

(b) Infidelity in all its forms; but even leaving this on one side, how many times her work of love is despised, she is treated as a slave, abandoned to herself; lack of consideration for her in every way.

3. *Children and their parents:*

(a) Less often parents in their treatment of their children—but frequent in the way children treat their parents;

(b) the small faults of every day—lack of obedience, consideration, respect. Youth is by nature egoistic. How many children have to weep later for the sins they have committed earlier against their parents! Above all, this usually happens when it is too late to do anything to repair the damage done.

4. *Brothers and sisters:*

There is no need to say any more than what has been mentioned already.

5. *Masters and servants:*

(a) How many masters (and mistresses) forget to look after their workmen and servants as if they were human beings, and treat them as slaves?

(b) Social justice is an obligation on all those who have others working for them.

### The example of Mary

*Twice in her recorded life:*

(a) Once at the annunciation:

She left all things to go to the help of her cousin Elizabeth.

(b) At the marriage feast:

She saw the need and helped at once. We should follow her example.



*Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

THE TEN LEPERS

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Galatians 3. 16-22

Gospel: Luke 17. 11-19

A: Texts concerning thanksgiving to God, and also ingratitude

1. *Thanks for benefits received:*

Here thou mayest eat thy fill and bless the name of the Lord thy God for the fair land he had given thee. Dt. 8. 10.

He who observes the day, observes it in the Lord's honour. Just so, he who eats does so in the Lord's honour; he gives thanks to God for it; and he who abstains from eating abstains in the Lord's honour, and he too thanks God. Rom. 14. 6. Cf. 1 Cor. 10. 31.

All is good that God has made, nothing is to be rejected; only we must be thankful to him when we partake of it, then it is hallowed for our use by God's blessing and the prayer which brings it. 1 Tim. 4.4-5.

2. *The spirit of gratitude in St Paul:*

I give thanks to my God continually in your name for that grace of God which has been bestowed upon you in Jesus Christ... 1 Cor. i. 4 if.

Give thanks continually to God, who is our Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 5. 20.

I give thanks to my God for all my memories of you, happy at all times in all the prayer I offer for all of you . . . Phil. 1. 3.

Nothing must make you anxious; in every need make your requests known to God, praying and beseeching him, and giving thanks as well. *Ibid.* 4. 6.

Give thanks upon all occasions; this is what God expects of you all in Christ Jesus. 1 Thess. 5. 18. Cf. 1 Tim. 2. 1.

3. *Ingratitude:*

Evil shall still haunt his dwelling, that repays kindness with injury. Prov. 17. 13.

Thankless if a man be, like the hoar frost of winter his hopes shall dissolve; like water that goes to waste they shall vanish. Wis. 16. 29.

6. *Its punishment:*

And thou, Capharnaum, dost thou hope to be lifted up as high as heaven? Thou shalt fall low as hell. Sodom itself, if the miracles done in thee had been done there, might have stood to this day. Matt. ii. 23. Cf. Luke 19. 43-44.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

## I. LITURGICAL

## Thanksgiving to God

This Sunday's liturgy, with the Gospel of the ten lepers, gives us an occasion for preaching on the theme of gratitude to God for all his benefits. There are many who plead with God to grant them graces and favour; few who thank him for the graces received. The Church gives us an example, because on all such occasions she sings to him a *Te Deum* of praise and thanksgiving. Even religious and contemplatives fail to practise this type of prayer.

The liturgy abounds in gratitude to God for all he has done for us. The very name Eucharist means thanksgiving, and this is one of the four ends of the Mass. We find frequent allusions to this theme in the liturgy, for example in the *Gloria* of the Mass. The Mass for Trinity Sunday is one long act of thanksgiving, while many of the Post-communions refer to our gratitude to God for all his benefits (e.g. that of the Sunday after of the Ascension. The whole of our life should be an act of thanksgiving).

If we can teach our people to take this obligation seriously, the whole of their religious life will become more human and pleasing to them. Sundays especially, the Lord's Day, should be dedicated to this practice. On that day we all assemble together at Mass to thank God for his benefits received during the past week and to ask him for others for the week to come.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

## A: The Epistle: Galatians 3. 16-22

i. *Argument:*

If we leave aside one or two phrases, the epistle of Paul to the Galatians is not very useful for modern preaching, because it is almost entirely dedicated to the solutions of a practical problem. The Galatians had allowed themselves to be deceived by some of the Jewish preachers who, half-converted only, tried to persuade the people that the way to Christ was through the Jewish faith, i.e. all should submit to circumcision and take part in Jewish rites and practices. It is not difficult to see how dangerous such things could be in the early history of the Church, because the Law was nothing but a shadow of the Gospel, and ceased to have any binding force once the latter had been preached by Christ.

2. *Texts:*

The general argument is this: The promise of God was made to Abraham and his seed—Christ. Between one and the other lay the

Law, a bond of union until such time as Christ should come, but one which now has no binding force or reason for its existence. Verse 16 establishes the foundation of the argument; the promise has the force of a last will and testament. It is we, as one with Christ, who inherit the promise. This promise was in full force long before the promulgation of the law, which therefore cannot annul it.

Verse 19 has an allusion to an ancient rabbinical opinion, according to which the Law was promulgated by angels, probably because of the physical phenomena which accompanied it on Mt Sinai (cf. Hcb. 2. 2 and Acts 8. 26). The whole point he is making is that the promise is the thing—not the Law, and our inheritance depends on the former, not on the latter.

There is a second argument to support the former one. Verse 18 says that the promise of the inheritance was a free gift of God and not the result of good works. If the inheritance were the result of obedience to the law it would lose this character of a free gift. Promise and law are therefore two worlds, completely separate.

Paul then goes on to discuss the purpose of the Law and its effects.

### *3. Applications:*

#### Universal character of the promise of redemption

This epistle gives us an occasion for explaining the universality of the promise of redemption made to Adam and confirmed so many times in the course of Jewish history; also an occasion of preaching on the relationship between the old Law and Christ.

Following up the promise made to Adam—and to the human race as a whole—God set out to build for himself one nation among all the others who would be the leaven which would transform the whole mass. For this reason he called Abraham, a nomad (interesting detail, because these wandering peoples are the ones who more easily keep the oral traditions pure). He promised Abraham that in him and his seed the whole world would be blessed and that all nations would flock to him. Here we have the double element in the promise which the Jews did not know how to interpret correctly, that of the one nation and the universality of the redemption.

Having built up the Jewish nation, God then bound it to him by the Law, which was intended to prepare them to be fertile soil for the coming of the Messiah. The law of itself had no salvation value, nor had the ancient rites which it contained. The idea of it was to direct the activities of the citizens towards good. It only bound the Jews and therefore had no reason to exist once Christ had come.

The Jews twisted this plan, through their national pride. They interpreted the original promise and the subsequent prophecies about the universal redeemer to mean that salvation would only come to those who belonged to the Jewish faith. It was an easy step



from this false interpretation to an exaggerated political nationalism and dominion.

At last the Messiah came and the whole world flocked to him. Only the Jews remained outside, faithful still to a Law which no longer had any binding force. Although God had spent so much time preparing them for the coming of the Messiah and his new Law, they did not recognize him when he appeared.

## B: The Gospel: Luke 17. 11-19

### 1. *The miracle:*

#### (a) The incident:

The scene of today's Gospel takes place during the journey of Christ from Galilee to Judaea. It would appear that, instead of going directly through Samaria, he took the border route which would lead him to the Jordan valley. In the course of this journey he passed by a town (St Luke does not give us the name, as usual); and when he drew near to it ten lepers met him. They were forbidden by Leviticus (13. 46) to live in inhabited places. This enforced isolation caused them to live together in order to help one another as far as they could, begging their food from a distance (4 Kings 7. 3). They knew about the miracles Jesus had worked and therefore they came to him and, from a distance, hailed him with the title Master—a title which only appears in St Luke, and which implies both the teaching power of the Rabbis and the power to rule and command.

Christ does not heal them immediately; first he sends them to the priests. The reason is simple; leprosy was not only an illness but also a legal impurity and since these legal impurities were governed by a religious law, it was the duty of the priests to declare in each case that the impurity no longer existed. Christ, who was always careful to respect the Law, sent them to the priests and each group would go different ways, the Jews to Jerusalem, the Samaritan to Mt Garizim.

It is easy to see how there could be a Samaritan among the Jews, because infirmity, especially an illness like this one, sweeps aside all frontiers and hatreds. It was a frontier region in any case, which makes it easier for Jew and Samaritan to mix.

#### (b) Egoism of the Jews, gratitude of the Samaritan:

The lepers went on their way towards the priests, showing their blind faith in Christ, since they had yet not been cured. Then the miracle happened, they found themselves clean—a technical word for the cure of leprosy. What took place in their hearts? It is not difficult to imagine their joy, but that joy in some cases was egoistic and in another turned to gratitude. The Jews continued on their way to Jerusalem, in a hurry now to be declared legally clean and to



start their lives over again. Only the Samaritan turns back to Christ and, recognizing him as God's intermediary, expresses his gratitude in gestures and words exclusively reserved for God.

All these men had faith, and therefore all were cured; but what a difference between the delicacy of the one and the forgetfulness of the others !

## 2. *Applications:*

### (a) Christ, healer of the human race:

This should be the first consideration; Christ, as healer of the human race, makes no distinction between nation or colour. He is intent upon only one thing, the cure of the wounds of soul and body. We are all sick, with the illness of sin. Let us turn to Christ as did the lepers and beg him to have pity on us.

He will heal us with his words, his medicines and his presence; with the beauty and holiness of his doctrines, if we will only meditate on them; with his divine calmness, that peace which the world cannot give. He will give it to us, and with it light for the present moment and hope for the future. He will heal us with his sacraments. Penance, which will cleanse us from the leprosy of sin; the Eucharist, to strengthen us. He will heal us by his presence in the Blessed Sacrament, where we can go to him and ask his pity, as did the lepers.

### (b) The prayer of the lepers:

It is a simple prayer and a humble one; it is also fervent. It is a prayer which accepts the Lord's conditions with living faith that all will be well in the end.

### (c) Gratitude we owe to God :

This is the principal lesson from today's Gospel, that of the gratitude we owe to God for all his benefits. There is nothing we have not received from him. It should be a living and fervent gratitude; and how difficult it is to find such in this world !

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

#### The respect due to priests

(Cf. *Sermon on Romans* 16.3. PG. 28, 203-207)

There is nothing which can do more harm to the Church of God than that disciples should not be united to their masters, fathers to sons and leaders to their subjects. . . . For which reason I ask you, beg of you, implore you, give up this evil custom of criticism. You

will do no harm to the priests against whom you direct your criticism, be it true or false; just as the Pharisee did no harm to the Publican, on the contrary, he did good, in spite of the fact that what he said was true. What is more, all that we do with such criticism is heap upon ourselves greater evils, like the Pharisee, who turned the sword against himself, receiving a mortal wound.

Lest something similar should happen to us, let us bring that untamed tongue into subjection. If one who censured a Publican could not avoid the punishment, how shall we, who attack our fathers in God, be able to defend ourselves? Mary, who murmured once only against her brother, received a terrible punishment (Num. 12. 10), and what shall happen to us who injure our leaders many times a day?

Do not tell me that there was a question of Moses, because I will reply that Mary also was in question. So that you may understand this in another form and see that you should not judge your priests, even though their lives may be evil, listen to what Christ had to say about the leaders of the Jews: The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not (Matt. 23. 2-3). Could anything worse than these be found, who rose up against the future disciples? Yet not even for that reason does he take away from them their due honour nor submit them to public shame. With reason, because if once we allow this liberty to our subjects, then at once the priests will be deprived of all authority in their teaching office. . . . For which reason David, having taken Saul by surprise, Saul the sinner, breathing threats of murder, one who merited such great punishments, pardoned his life and would not allow anyone to say as much as a harsh word against him, saying that he was the Lord's anointed (1 Kings 24. 7). . . .

The obligation of each is to examine his own life, lest he may hear one day—on the day of judgement—Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye; and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? (Matt. 7. 3). Truly it is hypocrisy to kiss the hand of the priest in public, so that all may see it, run to his door when we need baptism, and then afterwards, at home or in the street, heap insults upon priests and allow others to speak evil of those who are the authors and ministers of so much good.

If he is such an evil father, how is it that you find him worthy of belief and the minister of such great sacraments? If he seems in your eyes a true minister and worthy of belief, how is it that you allow others to criticize him, do not stop their mouths and do not detest those lips which speak such evil, so that you may receive a great reward from God?

We may add something else, a serious thing; that we shall suffer a dreadful punishment. The reason is that there is nothing which does

so much harm to the Church as this evil. Just as the body, unless the nerves are in good state, is subject to a thousand illnesses and a troubled life, so the Church, unless it is bound together with the bonds of charity, suffers many wars, increases the anger of God and is the occasion of many dangers.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(A summary of his teaching in two sermons concerning thanksgiving to God and the many motives we have for it. Cf. PL. 36, 1316-1322; 1738-1742.)

### We need to thank God constantly

#### 1. *Because he returns us good for evil:*

The mercies of God will never be before our eyes unless we also keep before them our sins. Do not think so much of the guilt of the sin, but of the condemnation which is its reward. That condemnation you have sought yourself; the pardon is given to you by God.

Do not say: That which God has given me, but rather: The return which God has made to me. You returned evil for good; he has given you good in return for evil. And in return for what good have you given him evil? Because you exist; because you are in his image and likeness. There is no need for you to seek keenly to find what you must return to him—his own image is what he asks of you. He asks to be paid in his own coinage.

#### 2. *Let us give him back his own gifts:*

What return shall we make to him, what gift, what sacrifice? That of not forgetting his gifts. God seeks praise, not for his own benefit, but so that you may take advantage of it. What he demands is not for himself, but for you. . . . Give him back something which is yours, if you can. No, better not, because if you give him something which is yours merely, then all you will return to him is sin. All that you have, you have received from him; the only thing which is really yours alone is sin. He does not want what is yours, but what is already his. Just as if you gave a farmer sheaves which he had already sown, while if you give him weeds, you give something which he did not sow and which is not his; so with God. Give him truth, praise him in truth. If you try to do it with what is yours you will only lie.

#### 3. *Because he strengthens our weakness:*

These are his gifts. What was due to the sinner except punishment? But that is not the return God makes to him; do not fear, do not tremble—merely love. Do not forget his good gifts and be converted to him quickly, lest you suffer his punishments.



4. *The heavenly physician is greater than our sins:*

But in spite of the pardon given to us, we still have to withstand the attacks which come to us through our weakness. It is inevitable that there should arise in you sensual impulses towards things that are unlawful. This comes from your sickness. You still drag around with you a weak body, so far death has not been swallowed up in victon', the mortal has not been dressed in the garb of immortality; the soul—in spite of its pardon—is still subject to the dangers of temptation, delights in fantasies and suggestions to evil. This is its weakness. Do not fear; all your illness will be cured. They are very grave, you tell me. Yes, but the physician is more powerful than they, and for such a one there is no illness which cannot be cured. You need do nothing other than allow yourself to be healed; do not reject his healing hand. He knows what he is doing. When he heals, you do not seek only the delights of his medicines, but resist also the stab of the knife. . . .

5. *The sick must allow themselves to be healed:*

Yes, he heals the sick, but he does not cure those who do not wish to be cured. Is there any greater boon than health ? . . . If you are not sick then you may think of what you like; but if you are sick, then think first of all of your health before anything else. Your health is Christ alone; so think of him. Receive the chalice of salvation, of him who cures all ills. If you really desire health, you shall have it. When you seek honours and riches you do not always attain them; but this health of yours is more important than they are and is in the hands of your own will.

6. *By the grace of God:*

Perhaps you begin to be proud when you hear that he gives you a crown. I am great, you say; I have fought hard. But with what strength? Yours to be sure, but given you by him. That you have fought is clear, and therefore you will receive your crown because you have won the fight; but see who has been the victor in the first place, see who has constituted you as victor with him. I have overcome the world, he said. And why do we rejoice that he has overcome the world as if we had won that victory too? We are glad because we too have won. We who were defeated in ourselves have been victors in him. In crowning you he crowns his own gifts, not our merits. I have laboured more abundantly than all they, says the apostle; but then he adds, yet not I, but the grace of God with me (1 Cor. 15. 10). After all his troubles are over he hopes for the crown which will be given to one who had fought a good fight, he who finishes the race, who keeps the faith; that crown of justice which the just Judge will give him on that day. Why? Because he fought. Why? Because he finished the race. Why? Because he kept



the faith. But why have you fought and how have you kept that faith ? Not I, but the grace of God with me. Therefore, if you receive the crown, it is because you are crowned through his mercy.

### Reasons for giving constant thanks to God

#### 1. *Grace of perseverance:*

You that stand in the House of the Lord . . . praise ye the Lord (Ps. 134.2).

You that stand, not you that fall. He is said to stand who perseveres, keeping the commandments; he who with unfeigned faith, firm hope and sincere charity, serves God and honours the Church, who does not give scandal through an evil life to those who wish to enter that Church, but who trip up over scandals. . . . Be grateful. You were once outside; now you are within. Do you think it is a small thing to stand in that place where God has to be honoured, the God who lifted you from the ground, placing you on your feet in his house, giving you knowledge and the ability to praise him? . . . Should we not meditate on why we are here ? Should we not think of what we were, where we were lying and from whence he has lifted us up ? Should we not remember that, being evil, we did not seek the Lord ? He sought us out, those who did not seek him ; he woke us, having found us, called us, brought us into his house, helping us to remain standing. He who thinks on these things and is not ungrateful will forget himself, burning with love for a God who has given him so many wonderful gifts. Since there is nothing he can return to God what more can he do but give thanks ?

#### 2. *Because God is goodness itself:*

Why should we praise him ? Because the Lord is good. . . . When I hear it said that the Lord is good I am overcome with tenderness and sweetness. When I consider and admire those things which I behold around me, when I delight in them, remembering that all have come from him, then I return to the very source of them all and I understand how good God is. But at the same time, when I enter into him as far as my abilities allow me, I find him so superior to me, for God is so good that he does not need any of these things to be good. That is why I do not praise these things except in him, while on the other hand I find him perfect without them. . . .

#### 3. *The whole universe is good:*

And what more shall I say ? Among creatures I contemplate a heaven which is good, a sun, a moon, the stars—all of which are good. The earth is good, as are the things to which it gives birth and which have their roots in it; all is good which walks and moves, which flies or swims in the waters of the earth....

4. *But nothing is good save God alone:*

Christ our Lord, who said that man was good, also added: None is good but God alone. Do not these words stimulate us to discover what it means to be good with the goodness of another and what it implies to be good of oneself? What is the goodness by which all these things are good? You will not find one single good which does not come from him. Just as it is something proper to him to be good, so it is to Be. It is not that the things he has made have no being. Would it not be an insult to say that the things he has made are nothing?... In spite of the fact that they are beings and exist, still, in comparison with him, he is forced to speak as if he alone existed: I am who am. He who IS has sent me to you (Exod. 3. 14-15). God did not say, he who is omnipotent, merciful, just—all of which would have been true—instead he left aside all the other names which could be used of God and replied that his name was the Supreme Being... and truly he IS in such a way that, in comparison, all created things are as if they were not. If they are *not* compared with him then they *are*, because from him they receive their being; but if they *are* compared with him, then they *are not*, because the only true Being is God.

5. *Thanksgiving because he came to us:*

If he had not given you his sweetness to taste of it, then perhaps you would not be able to say that he is good; but he gave himself in such a way to men that he even sent them the bread from Heaven, his only Son who is equal to him. He who is like to him in all things was given to us to become man and die for men, so that you, though what you are yourself, can taste what you are not. The sweetness of God was too great for you to taste, it is too high for you, abject as you are and fallen in the mud. But into the midst of that great distance came the mediator. You, O man, could not attain to God; God became man so that, since as man you can see men but not God, through the medium of a man you could reach him. Had he been a mere man only, then you have seen only what you are yourself and would not have attained the goal. Had he been merely God, you would not have been able to understand something which you are not, and neither would you have attained him. But God became man so that, by studying a man (a thing of which you are capable) you might reach God—something of which you are not capable. . . .

6. *Charity—the greatest thanksgiving:*

Let us love the Lord, our God; let us love the Church. Him as our Father, the Church as our mother. Him as the Lord; her as his slave, because we are sons of his servant, the Church. What great love has joined these two in wedlock! No one can offend against one and be

in the favour of the other. Let no one say: I can worship idols and consult soothsayers, but I have no intention of leaving the Catholic Church. You follow the Mother but have abandoned the Father.... Another may say: Far be it from me to do that, I do not consult soothsayers, but I belong to the Faction of Donatus. What profit is it to you not to have offended the Father when you heap insults on the Mother? Of what profit is it to confess the Lord, honour God, preach his Son, believe that he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and then blaspheme against his Church? Is not the example of any human marriage enough to convince us? If you had a master in whose service you labour day and night, wearing out his door-step with your service, adoring him, but at the same time you injure his wife. Would you even dare to enter into his house? My dearest brethren, remain loyal to God as to your Father and to the Church as your Mother, that so we may imitate those who have gone before us and that they may rejoice in us who pray for us. Thus may God be blessed for all eternity. Amen.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### Gratitude and ingratitude

(St Thomas's teaching on these points is a solid basis for preaching on a subject which is so frequently forgotten by the faithful.)

#### i. *Gratitude*:

##### (a) Due to any benefactor:

The nature of the debt to be paid must needs vary according to the various causes giving rise to the debt, yet so that the greater always includes the lesser. Now the cause of debt is found primarily in God, in that he is the first principle of all our goods. . . (2-2. q. 106, a. i. c).

The natural order requires that he who has received a favour should, by repaying the favour, turn to his benefactor according to the mode of each (a. 3).

Just as religion is super-excelling piety; so is it excelling thankfulness or gratitude; wherefore giving thanks to God was reckoned above many things.

##### (b) Gratitude a part of justice and charity:

Gratitude is a part of justice, not indeed as a species is part of a genus, but as a kind of reduction to the genus of justice.. ..

The debt of gratitude flows from charity, which the more it is paid, the more it is due, according to Rom. 12. 8. Owe no man



anything, but to love one another. Wherefore it is not unreasonable if the obligation of gratitude has no limit (*ibid.* a. 5. *ml* 2 and 6 *ad* 211*m*).

(c) Derives from love:

The debt of gratitude flows from that of love, and from the latter no man should wish to be free. Hence that anyone should owe this debt unwillingly seems to arise from lack of love for his benefactor (q. 107 a. I. *ad* *\$ium*).

(d) Three requisites for gratitude:

The first of these is to recognize the favour received, the second to express one's appreciation and thanks, and the third to repay the favour at a suitable place and time, according to one's means (q. 107. a. 2. c).

(e) Innocent and penitent:

Thanksgiving in the recipient corresponds to the favour of the giver: so that when there is greater favour on the part of the giver, greater thanks are due on the part of the recipient. Now a favour is something bestowed gratis: wherefore on the part of the giver the favour may be greater on two counts. First, owing to the quantity of the thing given: and in this way the innocent owes greater thanksgiving, because he receives a greater gift from God, also, absolutely speaking, a more continuous gift, other things being equal. Secondly, a favour may be said to be greater, because it is given more gratuitously; and in this sense the penitent is more bound to give thanks than the innocent, because what he receives from God is more gratuitously given: since whereas he was deserving of punishment, he has received grace. Wherefore, although the gift bestowed on the innocent is, considered absolutely, greater, yet the gift bestowed on the penitent is greater in relation to him: even as a small gift bestowed on a poor man is greater to him than a great gift is to a rich man.

2. *Ingratitude*:

(a) Three grades of ingratitude:

The first degree of ingratitude is when a man fails to repay a favour, the second when he declines to notice or indicate that he has received a favour, while the third and supreme degree is when a man fails to recognize the reception of a favour, whether by forgetting it or in any other way. ... It follows that it belongs to the first degree of ingratitude to return evil for good, to the second to find fault with a favour received, and to the third to esteem kindness as though it were unkindness (q. 107 a. 2. c).

(b) A sin:

A debt of gratitude is a moral debt required by virtue. Now a thing is a sin from the fact of its being contrary to virtue. Wherefore it is evident that every ingratitude is a sin (*ibid.* a. 1. c).



## SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### (c) Mortal or venial:

A man may be ungrateful in two ways: first by mere omission, for instance by failing to recognize the favour received, or to express his appreciation of it, or to pay something in return, and this is not always a mortal sin, because as stated above, the debt of gratitude requires a man to make a liberal return, which, however, he is not bound to do; wherefore if he fails to do so, he does not sin mortally. It is nevertheless a venial sin, because it arises either from some kind of negligence or from some disinclination to virtue in him. And yet ingratitude of this kind may happen to be a mortal sin, by reason either of inward contempt or of the kind of thing withheld, this being needful to the benefactor, either simply or in some case of necessity (q. 107. a. 3. c).

### (d) In every sin there is some kind of ingratitude:

In every sin there is material ingratitude to God, inasmuch as a man does something that may pertain to ingratitude. But formal ingratitude is when a favour is actually contemned, and this is a

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

#### The effects of sin

*{Interior Castle, chap. 2, i}*

#### i. *Fear of offending God:*

I once heard a spiritual man say that he was not so astonished at the things done by a soul in mortal sin as at the things not done by it. May God, in his mercy, deliver us from such great evil, for there is nothing in the whole of our lives that so thoroughly deserves to be called evil as this, since it brings endless and eternal evils in its train. It is of this, my daughters, that we should walk in fear and this from which in our prayers we must beg God to deliver us; for, if he keep not the city, we shall labour in vain, for we are vanity itself. That person to whom I referred just now said that the favour which God had granted her had taught her two things: first, she had learned to have the greatest fear of offending him, for which reason she continually begged him not to allow her to fall, when she saw what terrible consequences a fall could bring; secondly, she found it a mirror of humility, for it had made her realize that any good thing we do has its source, not in ourselves, but rather in that spring where this tree, which is the soul, is planted, and that sun which sheds its radiance on our works. She says that she saw this so clearly

that, whenever she did any good thing, or saw such a thing done, she betook herself straightway to its source, realizing that without his help we are powerless. She then went on at once to praise God; and, as a rule, when she did any good action, she never gave a thought to herself at all.

2. *Understanding God's favours and being grateful for them (Life, c. 10).*

Let anyone, then, who has arrived thus far give great praise to God and recognize how much he is in his debt. For it now seems that he wants him to be a member of his household and has chosen him for his kingdom, if he does not turn back.

Let him not trouble about certain kinds of humility, of which I propose to treat. We may think it humility not to realize that the Lord is bestowing gifts upon us. Let us understand very, very clearly, how this matter stands. God gives us these gifts for no merit of ours. Let us be grateful to his Majesty for them, for, unless we recognize that we are receiving them, we shall not be aroused to love him. And it is a most certain thing that, if we remember all the time that we are poor, the richer we find ourselves, the greater will be the profit that comes to us and the more genuine our humility.

It is a very evident truth that we love a person most when we have a vivid remembrance of the kind actions he has done us. If, then, it is lawful, and indeed meritorious, for us to remember that it is from God that we have our being, and that he created us from nothing, and that he preserves us, and also to remember *all the other* benefits of his death and of the trials which he had suffered for all of us now living long before any of us was created, why should it not be lawful for me to understand, realize and consider again and again that, though once I was wont to speak of vanities, the Lord has now granted me the desire to speak only of himself.

We must seek new strength with which to serve him, and endeavour not to be ungrateful, for that is the condition on which the Lord bestows his jewels. Unless we make good use of his treasures, and of the high estate to which he brings us, he will take those treasures back from us, and we shall be poorer than before, and his Majesty will give the jewels to some other person who can display them to advantage and to his own profit and that of others. For how can a man unaware that he is rich make good use of his riches and spend them liberally? It is impossible, I think, taking our nature into consideration, that anyone who fails to realize that he is favoured by God should have the courage necessary for doing great things. For we are so miserable and so much attracted by earthly things that only one who realizes that he holds some earnest of the joys of the next world will succeed in thoroughly abhorring and completely detaching himself from the things of this; for it is through these gifts that

the Lord bestows upon us the fortitude of which our sins have deprived us. And a man is unlikely to desire the disapproval and abhorrence of all, or the other great virtues possessed by the perfect, unless he has some earnest of the love which God bears him, and also a living faith. For our nature is so dead that we pursue what we see before us and so it is these very favours which awaken and strengthen faith.

## II. MARTIN HARRISON, O.P.

### Thanksgiving

(Some extracts from chap. Ixx of *Everyday Catholic*, pp. 342 ff.)

Gratitude is a virtue which should be spontaneous and natural to us; it is probably the easiest of virtues, since it requires no difficult effort on our part. Ingratitude is an odious vice and no one can respect the ungrateful. We are irritated at finding our favours accepted without any thanks and judge that we have given to an unworthy recipient. But whereas usually we are grateful to one another for favours, to God we are too often careless and indifferent in this respect. Gratitude is the 'memory of the heart' joined to a desire of repaying in some way the favour shown; it is the 'poor man'-payment'. No one, however poor he may be, is unable to be thankful; all can at least say 'thank you' and really mean it from the heart even though it may not be possible to do anything else in return...

It is unfortunately too true that we take God's gifts for granted as though we had a natural right to them. Were God to heal us by a miracle of some loathsome disease no doubt we should express gratitude for so signal a favour. Yet 'prevention is better than cure' and day by day through God's providence we enjoy good health but we seldom think of returning thanks. . . . Everything is a gift from God, given to us and preserved by his fatherly care, and for this we have a definite duty of returning thanks. What of the spiritual gifts? Especially faith! This is a gift; we have no right or claim to it; it is not given to all, but is a mark of God's special favour; but it is not always appreciated by those who have never known what it means to grope in the outer darkness of error, doubt, prejudice, and false teachings, neither do they realize the immense comfort of having been spared those doubts and anxieties which beset those who have not the light of true faith. Truly for this gift alone we owe a very great debt of thanks to God.

How often do we plead forgiveness of our sins? We cannot claim forgiveness as a right. Do we show any real gratitude for forgiveness and prove it by an amendment of life and a greater love for God? What of the gift of the Body and Blood of our Lord in Holy Communion? *Are we* really grateful for this astounding condescension

and do we prove it by the frequent acceptance of this most holy food of the soul?... The gifts of God are so many, he is so prodigal in giving, that we forget the immense debt of thanksgiving that we owe for such a great multitude of gifts showered upon us, all unworthy though we are. We forget that these are 'gifts' and not 'rights' to which we have a claim. . . . The very prodigality of his gifts should not make us forgetful but rather fill us with humility that we so unworthy should be so greatly favoured in spite of our past failures, that we who are so utterly incapable of returning adequate thanks should receive so much. Though we can indeed do little in return, we can at least utter a fervent 'Deo gratias' from a spirit of gratitude deep in the heart and soul.

## III. BOURDALOUE

### Confession

(Summary of this sermon on confession, using as text the words: Go show yourselves to the priests.)

#### 1. *Introduction:*

Leprosy, a loathsome and mortal illness, has always been used as an image of mortal sin. Just as the Lord sent these lepers to the priests, so he sends us to confession. The priests of the Old Law had no power to cure, only to declare that the illness had in fact disappeared. The priests of the New Law have the power to heal, absolve, make clean.

Yet it should surprise us that there are so many sinners who do not wish to take advantage of this great sacrament. They are sick indeed, but in their madness they do not even admit that they are ill. The theme of the sermon is the advantages for us of this sacrament, both when we are in a state of sin and when we are free from it. Providence has given us a means of wiping away sin and of preventing ourselves from falling into it.

#### 2. *Confession wipes away sin:*

Among all the other means open to us, this is the most effective. This power of the sacrament comes from two things, the will of God and the nature of the sacrament itself, which is such that it contains everything necessary to lead the soul to a spirit of perfect repentance.

##### (a) The will of God:

i. *the law of mercy.* To free ourselves from eternal condemnation all we have to do is accuse ourselves, and God will be content with that accusation. This is surely a new type of judgement. If an ordinary criminal excuses himself he is condemned; if he accuses himself he is pardoned and justified. From this it comes that our



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confessions are not wrung from us through tortures, but are free with repentance and love. Why? Because we know that, if God demands this condition, it is not to prevail over us, but to save us. David recognized this when he said: Pardon me, for I admit my sinfulness (Ps. 50. 4-5). This was a sure sign, according to St Jerome, that the saint knew and understood the intentions and the mercy of God. I recognize the little I can do in the way of reparation, is what he really means, but I also know that you will forgive me because I admit my guilt.

ii. *its double foundation—the goodness and omnipotence of God.* St Ambrose relates of the King Theodosius, that he used to judge certain criminals personally and, once they were proved guilty, would pardon them completely. I prefer to win them over, not to lose them, he used to say. That is God's way with us (Ps. 50. 6). The glory of God is made manifest in his pardon.

### (b) Confession and its benefits:

i. *it humbles us.* This is one of the fundamental elements in penance, according to the Fathers of the Church, who say that it is God's lesson in humility. In effect, there is nothing which humbles us so much as the recognition of our faults. Especially this is true if we think of it in terms of confession as we know it in the Church, not a vague accusation that we are sinners, nor a secret confession to God alone, but that made to a priest who does not know us, anticipating the very judgement of God, opening our consciences as God sees them. We accuse ourselves of being hypocrites, cowards, to a man who neither knows our weaknesses nor our trials, disposed to listen to whatever his zeal may dictate and accept the punishment he imposes.

Heretics have refused to accept the doctrine of confession to a priest because it is humiliating. Yet it is this very act of humiliation which gives it its value. Why should we be ashamed when it is this very shame which should move us to love confession? Your loss, dear brother, says Chrysostom, has been that you have not been shamed enough. Confession remedies this lack.

ii. *it excites contrition.* Because contrition is born of a living knowledge of the gravity and the malice of sin, and this we understand more clearly in the tribunal of penance than anywhere else. How many hard hearts have been softened once they approached this tribunal, because this is the moment of truth, a time when we cannot hide from ourselves the gravity and the malice of what we have done. I have sinned, was the cry of the greatest of penitents, and has been repeated by so many others since his day. See, says St Ambrose, the effect of these three words; they can change the heart of God himself; but they also changed the heart of David; from a homicide and adulterer he becomes a saint.

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iii. *its satisfactory value.* We cannot deny that confession is a penalty—a punishment in itself. St Ambrose calls it a ‘summary of all punishments’, a phrase which may seem exaggerated, but which has its foundation in sound theology’. The justice of God never loses any of its rights and, no matter what happens, knows well how to exact the due punishment for sin, either in this life or in the next. Faith teaches us that sin merits eternal punishment •and that this penalty’ is wiped away by confession. Therefore it is necessary that, in confession, there should be something which, in God’s sight, equals the eternity’ of the sufferings due. This element, which St Ambrose calls the summary of all punishments, is the self-accusation. Why? Because God has so willed it.

### (c) Confession prevents sin:

Confession prevents sin from three point of view :

i. *from that of Christ.* Confession is one of the many graces which spring from the wounded side of Christ. The graces particularly linked to this sacrament are those which defend and sustain us—those which prevent sin in the future.

ii. *with relation to the priest.* The priest, as one chosen by Christ to administer this sacrament, has special graces to guide souls and keep them on the right path. We should lament the error of those who do not go to confession or submit themselves to direction.

iii. *from our point of view.* We know well from our own experience that confession is a great brake on sin and evil desires. The very fact that we shall have to go to confession tomorrow and tell the priest what we have done is capable of preventing us from committing many crimes into which we would otherwise fall. The example of certain heretics shows us into what depths we can plunge once we rid ourselves of confession. Let us make due use of this great grace which Christ has given us.

## IV. ST ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

### God’s mercy for sinners (Summary)

#### I. *God's mercy calls the sinner to repent:*

##### (a) God calls:

There is no hostility on God’s part, only on that of the sinner. Indeed, the offended God is the one who weakens, humbles himself and seeks out the sinner to call him to repentance.

##### (b) in many ways:

He uses remorse of conscience, fear, threats of punishment, actual punishments in this life, illness, kindness too of all kinds. He makes repeated efforts to break through. We, sinners, have tried to drive God

from our souls, but he always returns; in fact, he never entirely abandons us, no matter what we do, and his efforts to get us to repent are constant. He consoles us, promises us that, if we give up our sin, he will make it up to us in so many ways. He offers us the good example of those who do love him with their whole heart, shows us how happy they are even in the midst of sufferings of all kinds.

(c) patiently :

Surely there is no offended person so patient with those who have injured him as God is with us.

(d) moved by his great mercy:

St Thomas says that the whole earth would, by natural instinct, be moved to punish the sinner and thus take revenge for the injury done to their creator. But God does not wish for the death of the sinner, but that he should repent and live. St Augustine says that if God were not God he would be unjust, since he has too much patience with sinners. He goes on to say that we sin and glory in it, month after month, year after year; but he suffers us in silence. We provoke his anger, and all he does is to extend to us his mercy. It would almost seem as if there was a wager between us; we try to do our best to offend him and awaken his anger; he does his best to bring us to repentance.

## 2. *His mercy towards the repentant sinner:*

(a) The tenderness of the divine embrace:

God does not know how to turn his face away from the sinner who repents (2 Par. 30. 9), and Christ himself said that he would never turn away anyone who came to him (John 6. 37). He is the Good Shepherd who takes up the lost sheep and places it on his shoulders (Luke 15. 5); he is the Father in the story of the prodigal son, who kisses and embraces him because he has returned safely home (Luke 15. 20).

(b) He forgets the sins of those who repent:

He tells us so himself (Ez. 18. 21-22; Isaias 1. 18). He tells us to argue with him (Isaias 1. 18), in other words, if he does not deal with us mercifully, we can hurl in his face the fact that he has not been faithful to his promises. What more do we need ?

(c) he glories in his mercy:

It is the attribute which is most vaunted in the Scriptures. By it he manifests his omnipotence, pardoning and receiving again the one who has offended him. By it he shows his independence of things created; it does not matter what his creatures have done against him; he is above all that. Why do sinners not take early advantage of this mercy now while there is still time? Why do you



not return to your Father's house, to that loving Father you have abandoned, like the prodigal son ? He awaits you with open arms to embrace you and forget your offences against him. The important thing is to return home once more.

## SECTION VI. LITERARY COMMENTS

### THE TEN LEPERS AND SIN

(From the *Catena Aurea* of St Thomas)

Just as the ten lepers may be taken as a type of the ten principal sins, the chief illness of our society', so the common supplication they made to God can be understood as a sign, showing us to whom we must go if we wish to be healed from them. The first sin is that of heresy', through which we, who have been born and brought up in the religion of Christ, renounce the practice of it entirely or partially. This happens at times through the influence of other interests, or through that obstinacy which causes us to shut our eyes to the truth, only to open them in darkness.

The second is blasphemy, by which we hurl vile insults at God and the Church, insults which we would hesitate to use against anyone else, even an evil-doer of the worst type.

The third is gluttony, by which we become lower than the animals. The fourth is avarice, through which we deny the labourer his due wage or pass by without heeding the pleas of the poor; trying to create a patrimony for ourselves out of the sweat and sighs of others.

The fifth is pride, by which we lift ourselves above God himself, making a mockery of his supreme law, and making use of every effort to bring to the ground both divine and human power. The sixth is ambition, by which we make use of every artifice, even the most vile and deceitful, to acquire honours which our lowliness would never attain, once faced with the true merits of others. The seventh is hypocrisy, by which we hide our interest in merely human things under a cloak of virtue, of heroism, magnanimity or philanthropy. The eighth is impurity, by which we become unworthy of our most pure Head, Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier, whose vessels we are.

The ninth is the unjust persecution of our neighbour, through which neither his goods nor his life are safe from us. The tenth is final despair, which closes our eyes to the warm and splendid rays of divine mercy, thus causing us to put an end to that life which God has given us.



## SECTION VII SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

Give us an increase in faith, hope and charity

The liturgy and the spiritual life

1. This scheme can be reduced to one point, a commentary on the first part of the Collect in which we ask God to give us an increase in faith, hope and charity.

2. As a foundation it is interesting to see how the liturgy is related to the spiritual life.

(a) It must not be understood as a series of rubrics or gestures; even less as a distraction to true piety.

(b) It is essentially spirit and life. In the liturgy we have a summary of all that is meant by the Mass as a sacrifice and the Sacraments, together with the fact that it is the official prayer of the Church.

(c) That is why St Pius X says that the first and indispensable source of Christian piety is the Liturgy (*Motu Prop.* 1903).

(d) Pius XII says the same in other words in *Mediator Dei*.

The spiritual life and the theological virtues

#### 1. *The theological virtues:*

Every soul wishing to make progress in the spiritual life must cultivate these especially.

(a) They are the most excellent of all and have a special part to play in the spiritual life and in the way of perfection;

(b) it would be wrong to spend too much time on the moral virtues to the neglect of these;

(c) they are mutually connected, it is true, but the most important are the theological virtues.

#### 2. *The most excellent of them all is charity:*

(a) it is the bond of perfection;

(b) faith is its positive foundation;

(c) hope the force which unites us to God and drives us towards him always;

(d) therefore we should cultivate these virtues in a special way, just as we insist on humility which is the negative foundation for all sanctity.

These virtues as the object of our prayer

#### i. *They are infused by God:*

(a) given to us in baptism;

(b) increased with every worthy reception of the sacraments;

(c) also by acts of these virtues.

2. *Therefore, if they are infused, we must ask God for them:*

- (a) they are necessary for all, both those who are still beginners in the spiritual life and those who are well on the way to perfection;
- (b) above all in moments of trial. No one will do any great work without falling back on them.

### Liturgical prayer

1. *It is frequent to come across prayers which have for their object these virtues:*

- (a) the Collect for the Vigil of Pentecost as well as that for Trinity Sunday;
- (b) on the feast of the Ascension we ask for an increase of hope; in the Collect for Easter for charity.

2. *In a special way they are grouped together in the Collect of today's Mass:*

- (a) here is a beautiful ejaculatory prayer;
- (b) we should have it on our lips constantly as a rule of life as well as a prayer.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### The prophecies and Christ

#### Their apologetic value

1. Prophecy is the announcement of future events which cannot be known by anyone except God himself. This is the type of prophecy to which Isaias refers (41. 21-23).

2. Therefore if, from the beginning, certain clear and detailed facts about the coming of Christ were announced, we must not merely recognize the inspiration of the prophets, but also the messianic nature of him in whose person they were accomplished:

- (a) because the proof of prophecy is in the fact that what was announced actually happened later;
- (b) if the prophecies about Christ proclaimed that he would die in a certain way and if it actually happened, then they are true and we must also admit that truth when they announce that Christ is the Messiah.

### The New Testament and the prophecy

I. Christ appeals to them: Search the Scriptures . . . they give testimony of me (John 5. 39). In the case of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, he appeals to the prophets, beginning with Moses (Luke 24. 27), and reproaches them for not having given heed to that message.

2. St Luke and St Peter also appeal to the same source of inspiration: Acts 2; *ibid.* 10. 43; 2 Pet. 1. 19, etc.

3. St Paul also: Acts 28. 23.

### Their dogmatic value

1. The important thing is to see how the Old and New Testaments coincide in their message concerning Christ and his mission (Matt. 5- 18).

2. There is a gradual progress from the vague to the definite in this revelation about Christ, the Messias.

### The first stage

#### 1. *From Adam to Moses:*

(a) The serpent has won a brief victory:

But a struggle is predicted between his seed and that of a woman. That seed will crush his head finally.

(b) Abraham:

i. the universal victory of mankind in his seed;

ii. God blesses him for that reason (Gen. 12. 2; 18. 17; 22. 17; 22. 18);

iii. from these prophecies we can conclude that the whole world will bless Abraham and that it will be through one of his descendants that this blessing -will come;

iv. there will be a universal victory over sin and death.

#### 2. *Moses:*

(a) the leader of the Jewish people, difficult to over-estimate his importance;

(b) in our Lord's day the people were waiting for the prophet-announced by Moses.

i. St John asks if Christ is he (John 1. 19);

ii. after the multiplication of the loaves and fishes it is said of Christ that this is the one they were waiting for (John 6. 14);

iii. the Samaritan woman is awaiting such a one (John 4. 25);

iv. Christ says that Moses wrote about him (John 5. 46);

v. all refer to Dt. 18. 18;

(c) therefore the character of that universal blessing becomes clear; it will consist in the coming of a prophet of the line of Moses and with his type of universal authority, the founder of a religion and a special envoy from God.

#### 3. *From Amoses until the coming of Christ:*

Gradually the figure of this Messias is drawn more clearly;

(a) he will be a priest for ever (Ps. 109. 4);

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(b) born of a Virgin (Isaias 7. 14);

(c) in Bethlehem (Mich. 5. 2);

(d) he will restore the glory of Israel; but he will do it in humility mounted on an ass (Ag. 2. 23; Zach. 9. 9).

4. *With the picture of the servant of God a new element appears:*

He will be a Man of Sorrows, a victim for the sins of others. David and Isaias draw the picture for us with all its details.

(a) David describes the sufferings of Christ, surrounded by enemies and dying on a cross (Ps. 21);

(b) Isaias is the Evangelist of the Passion in the Old Testament (42. 1-4; 52; 53. 1; 53. 2-12).

5. *All these prophecies were accomplished in Christ:*

But we must remember also that St Paul said that in many ways God spoke to the people in the days of Old, but now he has spoken to us through his Son (Heb. 1. 1-2).

### III. THE GOSPEL

A: Giving thanks

Thanksgiving

This was the feast to which Jesus was going when he came across the ten lepers.

(a) There were three great reasons for which the people of Israel had to give thanks to God according to the Law; for the flight from Egypt; for the Law of Moses on Sinai; and for the passage through the desert.

(b) The feast of Tabernacles was instituted so that, for eight days, they could give thanks to God for all the benefits they had received in the forty<sup>7</sup> years exile in the desert.

The Mass is the best of all thanksgiving sacrifices  
and ceremonies

The Gospel of today's Mass invites us in a special way to give thanks to God for all his benefits.

(a) The Evangelist praises the gratitude of the leper who returned to Christ after being cured;

(b) Christ insists on the same thing when he, too, praises him and complains of the lack of gratitude on the part of the others.

Thanksgiving for general benefits

1. *Those common to all men:*

(a) to be creatures of God, the family and atmosphere in which he has placed us, the means of livelihood, civilization, etc.;



(b) all these and many other things as well—are free gifts of God. As St Paul says, every good and perfect gift is from above, coming to us from our Father in heaven;

(c) they are given through no merit of our own, freely;

(d) being gifts, they can grow and increase with our use of them, into other things even more precious.

2. *Those individual gifts, given so freely to each one:*

(a) the call to the faith, baptism, a solid Christian education, etc.;

(b) each day we should thank God for these special gifts given to the individual;

(c) we are in a special position, special objects of his divine love and favour, especially in comparison with pagans.

### Thanksgiving for these individual favours

1. During the Octave of the feast of Tabernacles the Jews gave thanks for a special favour which they had received from God.

2. God has a certain measure of individual favours for each soul, family, nation.

3. All should be grateful for these favours.

(a) They may be interior illuminations, dangers avoided, sins forgiven.

(b) Each one is fully aware of these favours, received from God, at least in the interior secret conscience.

4. Like the individual, the family and the nation should give thanks.

This thanksgiving predisposes God to grant further favours

1. All the thanksgiving ceremonies of the Jews turned on the future—on the Messiah to come.

2. Gratitude is a merit for further favours in the future.

(a) Once God sees that a soul turns in thanksgiving to him for favours received he is disposed to open the treasure house of his gifts to that soul.

(b) God sees that his favour has increased a hundred-fold, because it has made the soul grateful to him for it.

(c) If the soul thinks only of the favour and not of giving thanks to the donor, then God's heart dries up and no further favours are granted.

(d) Gratitude is an act of humility, which wins the heart of God as does no other virtue. It opens the way for further favours.

(e) This is an easy way to win the heart of God, surely?

(f) The most difficult thing is to admit that all, whether pleasant or unpleasant, comes to us from the hand of God and that we should

be ready to thank him for *all* he gives us. This is the greatest act of humility' and one which infallibly wins the heart of God.

### Conclusion

Never to allow Christ to complain that we are lacking in gratitude. Listen to St Paul—Be thankful (Col. 3. 15).

### B: The favours of the Holy Trinity

#### Human ingratitude to Christ

1. Today's Gospel reminds us of this, but we should also ask ourselves if we are sufficiently grateful to the Trinity.
2. While it is perfectly true that God acts as one—the Three Persons together granting us favours; yet it is also true that, in many of those favours, there is a special mark or seal which leads us to attribute them to one or other of the Divine Persons.

#### The Father

In him we see the power of government and omnipotence.

(a) He is the creator, who gave me being and all that I have. His providence guides and saves me (Matt. 6. 25-34);

(b) he is the Father of the Word, and wishes to be our Father also (1 John 3.1);

(c) he rules the world as a Father—not as a Dictator.

#### The Son

##### i. *The Son of our Father in heaven:*

(a) Mirror for the creation of the world and all things—without him was made nothing, says St John in the first chapter of his Gospel.

(b) It is his sonship which is reproduced in ours; as our model, the son of the Father in heaven.

(c) How can we imitate such a high example? Because he was also made Flesh and dwelt amongst us—we can imitate one who has lived with us intimately.

(d) Man ruined God's image through sin and lost his divine sonship; Christ has restored that gift to us in its fullness.

##### 2. *He is our model and our redeemer.*

#### The Holy Spirit

##### *The love between Father and Son:*

Love unites those who love; this love sanctifies.

(a) He loves the works of God, perfects the task of Christ on earth, directs and guides the Church, etc.

(b) 11c loves each one of us; and since love is the union between those who love, he joins us to God in intimate affection.

(c) God dwells in us—as in a temple.

(d) He is the pledge of what is to come—our salvation.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son . . .

1. The hymn of thanksgiving to the Trinity.
2. Not because they are perfect in themselves merely, but also because of their work in us. Give thanks always to God.

### C: Before and after the favour

#### Before

##### i. *The lepers:*

##### (a) Knowledge of their state:

i. *a symbol of the sinner.* His first necessity is to recognize his sad condition, as it is his first step towards conversion. If he takes it, he is very near that conversion; until he takes it, he is far away. The lepers come to Jesus, as should all those who are unclean.

ii. *from afar off.* We can imagine that such a one would hardly dare to approach; yet he must approach, at least near enough to be saved by Christ.

##### (b) their prayer:

i. *humble.* This is necessary in every sinner; he has offended the God he approaches.

ii. *fervent.* Our heart and soul must be in our pleas for mercy and forgiveness.

iii. *petition.* Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Restoration to the divine level after sin is an even greater favour than that of justification in the first place. Because of the offence, pardon must be sought in humble sincerity—the *Miserere*.

##### (c) their faith:

They obey and believe without a murmur.

##### 2. *Christ:*

(a) compassionate and understanding as always; he commands that they go to the priest at once;

(b) the task of the cure of the soul should not be put off until another day. Who knows if we shall be given the grace tomorrow which has been granted us today? Who knows if, in our case, tomorrow will even come—at least in this life? Who knows if the God who is disposed to pardon us today will be equally disposed if we add the accumulated sins of tomorrow?

## After

1. *The Samaritan:*

(a) he gave thanks, with all signs of genuine gratitude, prostrations, loud voice, etc. ;

(b) the thanksgiving of the sinner should be even more fervent because his cure has been greater.

2. *The other nine:*

(a) Only one gave thanks.

(b) In their case it was due to the natural forgetfulness of the human heart, perhaps the natural wish to be re-united with their families, etc.

(c) In the case of the sinner it is due to a lack of appreciation of the graces received. Perhaps for this very reason we fall into sin again. God does not throw away his gifts on those who do not appreciate them.

3. *The complaint of Christ:*

(a) Ingratitude hurt him—he says the same to St Margaret Mary.

(b) A delicate heart is always more hurt by ingratitude than by positive insults.

(c) Christ knows what it cost him to free us from sin; is it not natural that he should be hurt by our ingratitude ?

D : And where are the nine ?

## Disproportion

1. There is a great lack of proportion between the one leper who returns to give thanks and the nine who do not. That is the motive for the complaint of Christ—and where are the nine ?

2. Unfortunately, this lack of proportion is only too general :

(a) In comparison with the numbers who really do give thanks to God for his favours, there is a great multitude who do not even think of it.

(b) They do not remember that they receive all things from God ;

(c) they do not even bother to sing his praises, even with their lips ;

(d) they do not make good use of his favours once they have received them;

(e) they do not use them well and so produce good fruit a hundredfold.

## God's providence and its method of action

i. St Bernard says that man is often unhappy and afflicted because he does not understand the method of action of Divine Providence.



2. God heaps benefits on us without revealing himself, on most occasions.

(a) Usually he acts through secondary causes;

(b) he keeps us alive—an act as great as that of creation, but one which passes us by unheeded;

(c) the simple washing of an infant with water in baptism performs a transformation in that soul which is beyond human power to appreciate fully—yet we do not even think of it at times.

3. *We are so used to God's favours:*

(a) familiarity which breeds contempt?

(b) we are not accustomed to appreciate things which are given to us so frequently;

(c) we might do so if we realized that, were the favour withheld, the effects would be mortal in many cases;

(d) on the contrary, if these favours are withdrawn, even for a short time, we usually blame God, complain that he has abandoned us, etc.

### Our crude spirituality

1. The fact that we lack faith is the reason for fixing most of our attention on the things of this life without looking beyond them to God.

2. There is a special lack of filial appreciation of God as our Father—we may say **Our Father,** but how much do we mean it in all its details?

3. The soul in trouble is the one which usually refuses to accept God's commands. It does not realize the benefit received under such circumstances.

(a) Then he offers us a great occasion of gaining merit before him;

(b) a means of expiation for sin in the past;

(c) through the cross he unites us and even identifies us with himself in a special way, makes us sharers in his redemption and means of its extension.

### A virtue for special souls

1. *The recognition of benefits received demonstrates two things in the soul:*

(a) humility—what have you which you have not received?

(b) nobility of soul. It gives honour where it is due, and thus begins to pay the debt for what it has received.

2. *Souls who were especially grateful:*

(a) that of Christ himself, who never ceased to give thanks to his Father.

(b) Our Lady—the *Magnificat*.

### E: Gratitude as a prayer

Where are the nine ?

He asks, not because he does not know where they are, or the excuses for their apparent ingratitude, but as a lesson to us.

### Gratitude as an excellent prayer

1. Many prayers go up to heaven from earth and although they have the aspect of true prayer, still they contain much which is purely natural.

(a) They come from self-love rather than from the love of God.

(b) I pray because I am weak, sick, with difficult problems to solve, in danger, etc.

2. There is another prayer which is not founded on necessity, but on simple gratitude.

(a) One which has two aspects, adoration and thanksgiving;

(b) like that of the Samaritan in today's Gospel.

### Something proper to noble souls

i. There is a union between the sentiment of love and that of gratitude.

(a) Gifts conquer the heart and arouse in it sentiments of gratitude.

(b) A heart begins to love when it begins to be grateful.

(c) This is the outstanding characteristic of a sensitive soul ; while cold hearts do not usually see the need to give thanks always for benefits received.

2. For this reason the prayer of thanksgiving is, as St Augustine says, that of the saints.

(a) Christ used it on many occasions. (The prayer at the Last Supper.)

(b) He willed to be with us always on the Altar as our Eucharistic sacrifice—our thanksgiving in a perfect way.

### The benefits of this prayer

1. It increases true fervour of soul, since it comes from love- it unites us more to God, which is true fervour.

2. It is the source of new and greater favours.

3. We see it in today's Gospel: first cured of bodily leprosy, the Samaritan who returns to give thanks is then cured of spiritual evils.

### God's benefits

Each day contains so many of them that they would be impossible to count. Both in the physical and moral orders we are constantly receiving graces and favours from God. This is the foundation of a real duty—that of giving thanks.

### Let us give thanks to God

Anyone who has received a favour should recognize the obligation of giving thanks.

(a) We may think that only those who have good things from God should be grateful—health, money, friends, etc.—while those who are poor, starving, in sickness and suffering have not this obligation.

(b) This is not so. Even the latter have to be thankful, because in the midst of their sufferings they can and should find God.

(c) From the supernatural point of view the greatest blessing is the cross.

### A practical way of giving thanks

We can reduce this to three points:

1. *The Eucharist:*

The best method.

2. *Evening prayer:*

Every night, before going to sleep, the Christian should adore God and give him thanks for all those graces and blessings he has received during the day.

3. *Avoid the three grades of ingratitude which St Thomas mentions:*

(a) not giving thanks on return for benefits received;

(b) pretending that he has not received them;

(c) not recognizing the fact of their reception, through forgetfulness or something else.

(d) To the first grade belongs the fact that one returns evil for good; to the second, doubting the fact that what we have received is a gift; to the third taking the gift for an evil rather than a good.

### F: The greatest gift

### Gratitude in the Scriptures

The duty of being grateful to God is preached in all the pages of the Scriptures. We shall take just one passage for examination—in the Book of Tobias, because of the doctrine contained in it.

### A sublime teaching

1. Everything combines to make this one of the greatest pages of Scripture, from our point of view.

The circumstances, the figure of the Father, once severely tried, but happy and contented ; that of the son, worthy of such a Father.

2. *Some of the expressions used:*

Thou art great, O Lord, for ever, and thy kingdom is unto all ages. For thou scourgest, and thou savest; thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again; and there is none that can escape thy hand. Give glory to the Lord, ye children of Israel; and praise him in the sight of the Gentiles.... I will praise him in the land of my captivity, because he hath shewn his majesty toward a sinful nation.. . . Bless ye the Lord, all his elect; keep days of joy, and give glory to him (Tob. 13.1-10).

### The doctrine of the book

1. *The special teaching of this book:*

It is that God rewards men of prayer, who live a virtuous life and practise mercy and justice.

(a) God has in fact given this very reward to Tobias for his alms-deeds.

(b) Compare his two wills, one when he thought he was dying, the other when he was actually in danger of death; the former made when he was poor, the latter when he was rich with God's gifts of all kinds.

2. *The first:*

(a) the counsel to give alms generously (Tob. 4. 7);

(b) to be merciful;

(c) to keep the Lord in mind always and not to sin.

3. *The second:*

(a) serve the Lord in truth, and seek to do the things that please him (*ibid.* 14.10);

(b) and command your children that they do justice and alms-deeds; and that they be mindful of God, and praise him at all times in truth, and with all their power (*ibid.*, verse 11).

### Gratitude expressed in almsdeeds in the doctrine of St Paul

1. 2 Corinthians 8,9. In these chapters St Paul commands the collection to be made in Corinth for the poor in Jerusalem.

2. This is a form of gratitude which is most pleasing to God because it awakens in the heart of the poor man praise of God.



- (a) It unites the Church in a hymn of praise to God;
- (b) the poor give glory to God for our generosity;
- (c) and also they glorify him by their prayers for us (*ibid.* 9.12-14);
- (d) the apostle ends by saying: Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift (*ibid.* 15).

(c) This gift is that of almsdeeds, which unites and glorifies the Church, because God prefers almsdeeds to all sacrifices (Osee 6. 6; Matt. 9. 13).

#### Without the gift of almsdeeds . . .

1. Isaias has a wonderful passage in which he sums it all up for us:  
Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress. Let them that are broken go free: and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry and bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked, cover him and despise not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear . . . (Isaias 58. 6 if.).
2. God does not accept the gratitude, prayers, fasts or sacrifices of the man whose heart is dried up and who has no mercy for his brother.

### G: The gratitude of Mary

#### The Magnificat

1. No creature, after the Son of God made man, ever praised God so much as the Virgin Mary. Her whole life was one continuous act of thanksgiving to God for all his benefits.
2. God wished to leave this to us as a precious inheritance in the *Magnificat*—that sublime canticle of praise to the Most High God which sums up all that is wonderful in the Canticles of the Old Law, those of Moses, Deborah, Anna, Ezechias, the three young men in the furnace, Tobias, etc.

#### Its three parts

1. The whole Canticle is found in the first chapter of St Luke, the Evangelist of women, of the jubilant hymns.
2. *It has three parts:*
  - (a) The first, from verses 46-49, is praise of God and thanks for all his benefits, especially that of the Incarnation;
  - (b) the second (w. 50-53) praise and thanks for all the common benefits given to the Chosen People before the coming of Christ;

(c) the third (w. 54 to the end) sings the praises of God for the fulfilment of all the divine promises made to the people of Israel. Here we must understand by the People the whole descendants of Abraham, therefore all those who are one with and redeemed by the Son of God.

#### The Fathers on the Magnificat

1. The Fathers have written many pages on each word of this Canticle. He glorifies God, says St Bernard, who with a constant mind sustained by piety and with his thoughts lifted up to divine things, withstands with patience the trials of this life.
2. St Augustine says: He glorifies God who contemplates the multitude of his creatures in all their beauty and, resting on them, lifts up a pure and lofty mind to their creator.

#### My soul . . .

Only our Lady can say with absolute truth 'my soul'—her soul is hers.

(a) She gave the whole of her soul to the Word of God and what is his is hers;

(b) through the perfection of her charity. The more we love God, the more we love our own soul. She possessed her soul by charity, love of God;

(c) by her patience and her full dominion over the lower part of the soul, the passions. No one else, however perfect, can say the same.

#### The Lord . . .

Elizabeth said to Mary that she was blessed because she had believed. Mary does not thank her cousin; she refers all thanks to God. It is almost as if she asked Elizabeth to forget her and join her in thanking the Lord for all his benefits.

#### Rejoicing

The word used here implies an external manifestation of interior joy and happiness. It is a sentiment which is so strongly felt that it cannot be hidden.

#### The humility of his handmaid

1. This virtue, so typical of Mary, implies a recognition of God's blessing as a free gift from him.
2. St Augustine, keeping this in mind exclaims: O true humility which gave birth to a God, given to men, and thus gave life to men'

renewed the whole world, purifying it and opening paradise once more to captive mankind. O blessed humility of Mary. You were the heavenly ladder by means of which God came down to men.

### Humility and praise

1. Humility in Mary implied a total lack of self-seeking and a perfect poverty of spirit. For this reason it was full of the divine spirit.

(a) because she reached the fullness of humility God raised her up to the heights; the humble shall be exalted (Luke 14. 11);

(b) because she was free from all attachment to things of earth, God granted her the fullest measure of grace.

2. That is why all praise given to Mary goes, in fact, to God, because she is the most perfect of all creatures; for which reason she did not fear to say that all generations would call her blessed.

3. The hymns of praise for Mary are in fact thanksgiving hymns of the whole human race addressed to God himself. She is, as it were, a channel through which our praises and thanks can flow.

### H: The gratitude of Christ and our ingratitude

#### Two themes which are united

1. Christ came on earth to give due praise to the Father. He did this by opening the way to heaven for us, giving us grace on earth and the glory of eternal happiness in heaven.

2. Thus he restored the decrees of divine providence which had been upset by sin.

3. He came also to make us happy, to help us to follow him by co-operating with his grace; to free us from the chains of sin.

4. *A twofold ingratitude:*

(a) Those men who are ungrateful to Christ deprive the Father of the glory which Christ wished to give him in their persons;

(b) this ingratitude produces a real sorrow in the heart of Christ;

(c) these are our two themes.

### Christ came to praise the Father

He came to give glory to the Father, to magnify his name, to give him constant thanks. To cite all the texts would be to repeat word for word the whole of the New Testament. We may indicate some of the main texts.

(a) The *Our Father*—the whole of the first half is given up to praise and thanks to the Father.

(b) It was zeal for the honour of his Father which prompted the casting out of the merchants in the Temple (Matt. 21. 13).

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(c) In all his greatest miracles he begins by giving thanks to his Father; for example, in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Matt. 14. 19).

(d) Before instituting the Eucharist he gives thanks (Mark 14. 22-23).

(e) His daily bread was to do the will of his Father (John 4. 34).

(f) The main text is that in the last discourse to his apostles at the Supper. In his prayer to his Father he makes the double claim that he has glorified him, finishing the work he was given to do and revealing his name—i.e. his power—to men (John 17. 4-6).

### The Pauline texts

1. Through his obedience Christ gave the greatest possible glory to the Father, for which reason he was exalted above all others (Phil. 2.8-9).

2. Christ is described as the splendour of the glory of the Father and the figure of his substance (Heb. 1. 3).

3. Once death, the last enemy, has been overcome, Christ will submit all things to the Father, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 28).

### The pain of Christ

1. When we speak of suffering in Christ we use the word in its real sense, because Christ was a man and could suffer like other men; in fact, his pain and sufferings were greater than those of any other human being.

2. When we use this word of God it is in a metaphorical sense, because God is perfect and cannot suffer pain.

3. Christ suffered from the first moment of his life on earth until his death on the Cross.

(a) One of the greatest causes of his suffering was the ingratitude of men to the Father. It is expressed in today's Gospel—where are the nine? Is there no one who will return and give thanks to God except this stranger?

(b) Lack of appreciation, despising the graces received—these are the causes of his greatest sufferings.

### The agony in the garden

1. *This agony was caused mainly by moral sufferings:*

(a) It is true that the thought of the physical sufferings of his coming Passion enters into the picture;

(b) but the main cause is the moral suffering implied in:

i. the sins of men against his Father;



- ii. their lack of gratitude to him;
- iii. the infidelity and ingratitude of so many of his friends.

2. *In the passion we see:*

(a) The treason of Judas, whom Christ tried to call for the last time when he says to him, so gently; Friend, what have you come here to do ? Will you betray the Son of Man with a kiss ? (Luke 22.48). It is a call to Judas' heart in the first case, and to his conscience in the latter. It failed.

(b) The lack of real love in his disciples; Simon, could you not watch one hour ? (Mark 14. 37).

(c) The lack of loyalty in Peter, implied in the gentle, loving look which our Lord gave him after his betrayal, and which was the cause of his immediate repentance and tears (Luke 22. 61-2).

(d) The infidelity of the Chosen People, to whom he had given so many graces and who paid him back with insults and blows.

### The offence against the Father

1. In today's Gospel our Lord is sad, not because these lepers did not return to thank him for the miracle, but because they did not give due thanks and glory to God for it.

2. To Christ in his agony in the garden we might well apply the words: Of what use is the shedding of my blood if men will continue to offend against the Father ?

(a) His first words from the Cross show that he is thinking of this all the time; he asks his Father to forgive men, because they do not know what they are doing when they offend him.

(b) Until the very last moment he is thinking of the ingratitude of men and the glory of his Father.

### Reparation

1. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in one aspect is a devotion dedicated to reparation for the offences of men against that Heart of Christ.

2. This Feast is an invitation to honour the Father by uniting ourselves to the sentiments of sorrow in the heart of Christ. It is a reply to the plea of Ps. 68, 21 : My heart hath expected reproach and misery. And I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none.

### I: Reparation to the Sacred Heart

#### Today's Gospel

- i. It shows us an act of generosity on the part of Christ and, on the other hand, the ingratitude of the majority of those who received a favour.

2. *Christ complains:*

(a) he cannot stand ingratitude;

(b) it is the same complaint which he later reveals to St Alargaret Mary: Behold this heart which has so loved men and which receives from them in return nothing but ingratitude.

3. The leper who did return represents those devoted to the Sacred Heart, who try their best to make due reparation to him for the ingratitude of men.

## Reparation according to recent Papal documents

I. *The acts of consecration:*

Three have been published in recent years:

(a) Pius IX, 22 April 1875;

(b) Leo XIII, 1895;

(c) Pius XI, in the Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, together with the act of Consecration to be read in all churches on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.2. *Reparation:*It can be summed up in the words of Leo XII: *All* have to make an effort to present due reparation, by means of their good works and prayers, for all the insults which are daily committed against the Divine Majesty in the whole world, by men who are ungrateful.

## Pius XI

1. *The obligation:*

It is undoubtedly this Pope, in his Encyclical, who insists most of all on this obligation and its reasons.

The act of public consecration must be united to the interior act of reparation, which springs naturally from love for Christ.

2. *Its motives:*

(a) Justice:

So that the insults offered to God by men may be repaired, and the order which has been violated restored by due penance.

(b) Love:

To suffer together with Christ and to console him for the ingratitude of so many, even of his so-called friends.

3. *Man; his reparation through and with Christ:*

(a) The whole race is bound to make this reparation from the moment in which all men were contaminated by sin. The instinct of the race since then has led to sacrifices to appease the anger of the God offended.

(b) Sin made due reparation impossible for man; as a sinner he was incapable of making satisfaction.

(c) Christ offered himself as victim for sin in man's place, and even though this abundant satisfaction repaid the debt due for all sin, nevertheless :

- i. we have to fill up in our own persons the things lacking;
- ii. we must unite our satisfactions to his.

4. *Reparation in the devotion to the Sacred Heart:*

(a) It occupies the first place in this devotion.

(b) Even though it might seem at first sight that acts of devotion can no longer bring any consolation to Christ in his glory, we must remember that, just as the sins committed after his death were present to his mind at the time of his sacrifice; so too were the acts of reparation.

5. *The need for reparation:*

(a) The world continues to sin, to lead astray families and nations from God.

(b) Even Catholics are not as faithful as they should be.

(c) Some even turn against Christ who redeemed them.

(d) Resolution to make some reparation for our own sins and those of others.

## J: Without distinction of race

### Racialism

1. *Nine Jews and a Samaritan were joined by their common misery:*

(a) Christ, whose field of action was usually limited to the Jews, makes no distinction of race or creed on this occasion;

(b) even though the Samaritans were hated by the Jews.

2. *Racialism, in its worst aspect:*

Consists in a distinction of races so that one is considered above the others.

(a) It consists in despising certain people because of their colour or race, denying to them the rights given to others.

(b) In a religious sense it would consist in denying to them the possibility of salvation.

(c) Politically, it may show itself in a desire to dominate and in certain cases, deprive them of their due rights, both religiously and from the civil point of view; exploitation in all its forms; civil inferiority.

### The Jewish mentality and that of the Church

1. *The Jews were racialists in the worst sense of the word:*

(a) God, in the Old Testament, did not reserve his salvation for one race. His will was always universal.

(b) He did choose one nation to be the deposit of his revelation until the time should come to preach it to the whole world. By this means he also wished to prepare a home for his Son.

(c) But the Jews misinterpreted this fact, as if they were to be the only ones to benefit by the coming of the Messiah, and that others would only profit by that coming if they allowed themselves to be dominated by the Jews. Of that we have two examples easy to check; in the time of St Paul they wished that all who came to the Christian religion should be circumcised; they called all those who were not Jews, Gentiles, i.e. mere 'people'.

## 2. *The doctrine of the Church is definite:*

(a) There was no one so proud of his Jewish blood as St Paul; yet he has no hesitation in saying that, after the coming of Christ, there is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile, Greek or stranger. Christ has broken down that wall.

(b) In his letter to Timothy, after telling him that he should pray for all, especially for rulers that their government may be wise and a benefit to all, he gives the reason: because there is only one God, one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as redemption for all men.

(c) St Peter—no less a Jew—says that God does not wish that anyone should perish, but that all should be saved (2 Pet. 3. 9). Salmeron comments on this by saying that man is worth so much, since Christ redeemed him at so great a price.

(d) There is no need to insist, because the universality of the love of Christ is the central theme of the Gospels:

- i. he is the Lamb who came to save the whole world (John 1.29);
- ii. he came, as he says, to save all men (Matt. 8. 11);
- iii. he is the good Shepherd and has many sheep outside the fold (John 10.16).

3. It is not surprising, then, that from the very first, the apostles spread the faith to the whole world, without distinction of race or frontiers, or that the early writers in the Church should use such phrases as this: Mary is the cause of her own salvation and of that of the whole world.

## Conclusion

If, then, God wishes all men to be saved and if, in heaven, there will be no distinction:

(a) all men, no matter of what race, are equal in his sight. All have the same value, that of the blood of Christ;

(b) after this, the other distinctions of colour, science, civilization are of little value;



(c) from this it follows that the more highly civilized races have one object in God's sight—to lead the lower ones to their salvation and to their proper place in the plan of redemption.

### K: Sin—the universal stain

#### Leprosy

1. This is not a local disease—it soon extends to the whole body, without the possibility of a cure, at least at the moment.
2. It stains the spirit—by the depression it produces in the individual :
  - (a) he knows himself to be incurable;
  - (b) he sees that he is treated as a leper by others, with the greatest caution;
  - (c) usually he is isolated, treated only by heroic souls who have given their lives to that purpose.
3. In the time of Christ it was a stain on society as well; the lepers were banished from public life, they were considered as impure, had to cry out to warn people if they were near.

#### Sin

1. *It stained the glory of the angels:*  
One sin opened for many of them the path to hell, which had to be created for them.
2. *It stains the paradise made for man:*  
Our first parents possessed grace, the preternatural gifts, a special intelligence and understanding, they lived in an earthly paradise in continual conversation and friendship with God.
3. *All this was, in one moment, lost by sin:*  
All the world's evil entered at that moment. Loss of grace, death, suffering, work which demanded sweat and blood, etc.

#### This stain passed to all the seed of Adam

We can see it in the calamities which afflict the world, natural and supernatural, material and spiritual.

#### Sin as a stain on the Church

*Any sin is a stain on the Church:*

- (a) The Church is not an ideal, but a society made up of individuals—we are the Church.
- (b) Each individual Christian, even though his or her sin may be hidden, corrupts not merely his own person, but also the Church herself, doing a grave harm to Christ, who died so that his Spouse, the Church, should be clean and pure for all time.

### Conclusion

We should be aware of our sins, not merely as individual crimes against Christ, but also as wounds in his Mystical Body, the Church, which can deprive many of the graces they might have received if we had been faithful.

### L: Confession

#### The miracle and the priests

1. Christ, instead of bringing about this miracle directly, sends the lepers to the priests, who from the legal point of view, were the only ones who could pronounce them cured.
2. The Fathers of the Church, commenting on this fact, see these points:
  - (a) the leper is the type of the sinner;
  - (b) leprosy is a type of sin, a mortal illness of soul;
  - (c) the steps these lepers had to take mark out for us the steps the soul has to take in order to be free from sin; it must be justified by the sacrament of Penance;
  - (d) God is the one who heals the wounds of sin, just as Christ was the one who cured the lepers; but it must be through the sacerdotal power.
3. We should think of the benefits offered us in the sacrament of Penance;
  - (a) admiring the work done by Christ;
  - (b) being thankful for such a great grace;
  - (c) by making use of it to obtain all the benefits intended by Christ when he instituted it.

### Confession and God

#### 1. *Confession as an act of worship of God:*

(a) It is a true act of worship, because of the oral manifestation of sins committed against God, together with the sentiments of reparation it contains.

(b) A sacrifice to God is a contrite heart and an afflicted spirit (Ps. 50.19).

#### 2. *It is a manifestation of the justice of God:*

The fact that a man reveals his own sins personally is a manifestation of the fact that he understands that, by them, he has offended God's justice.

#### 3. *It is also a proof:*

(a) of human weakness, both from the fact of sin and from the fact that we cannot, of ourselves, get rid of sin;

(b) of the omnipotence of God who can alone restore us to a state of grace.

### It gives honour and glory to Christ

1. He was condemned as an evil-doer—for our sins. By our sincere confession we accuse ourselves and free him.
2. We honour him because, by our confession, we admit the power of his redemption on our behalf.
3. We show our love for him. He from whom we have fled by sin is sought in all humility by sinners, in order to seek mercy and forgiveness.

### Confession and the penitent

#### 1. *It assures us of pardon:*

In the Old Law pardon was promised to those who were sorry for their sins; but there was no voice to assure them that they had attained that pardon. We have the voice of the priest saying to us: I absolve thee.

#### 2. *It teaches humility and raises us up:*

Sin is an act of pride against God; confession one of humility which raises up the one who humbles himself.

- (a) It relieves the burdened heart;
- (b) in confession the penitent draws near to a man like himself, who can understand his difficulties;
- (c) psychology recognizes the advantages of this.

#### 3. *It is a source of joy and happiness:*

- (a) because a man in confession weeps for his sins—a source of joy;
- (b) because there he receives the embrace of pardon, like the prodigal son.

4. We should learn to appreciate and use this source of spiritual consolation and relief.

### M: Spiritual Direction

#### An ordinary means

1. In the meeting with the lepers Christ demands that they show themselves to the priest:
  - (a) to fulfil the law;
  - (b) so that the priests could declare them cured.
2. In the spiritual life it is also necessary to show ourselves to the priest as we are, so that he may direct and guide us.

(a) Spiritual direction is a theme which is not as well understood as it should be;

(b) for that very reason it is necessary to have clear ideas about it.

### Persons who are apt for spiritual direction

*In general all those who sincerely seek spiritual progress:*

(a) Those in the world or those in a convent—it is all the same.

(b) The way to sanctity may be different in both cases, but the end is the same, and both need spiritual direction.

(c) In the concrete, those need spiritual direction who are beginning the way to perfection; so as not to despair, not to show cowardice in their efforts to overcome venial sin, to conquer imperfections, affections to things of this world, etc. ;

(d) to order their lives in a proper plan.

(e) Those who are more advanced need it most.

### The need for direction

Anyone who wishes to advance to sanctity needs spiritual direction as an ordinary means to that end.

(a) It is enough to quote one saint—Vincent Ferrer: Christ will never give us the grace without which we can do nothing to one who, having at his disposal a man to whom he can go in his need, refuses to place himself under his direction, thinking that he is a law unto himself, and that he alone can discover all that is necessary for his salvation.

(b) St Bernard puts it in a nutshell: He who is his own director has a director who is an idiot.

### The true idea of direction

1. *It is not a slavery:*

(a) It is entirely in accord with personal liberty;

(b) no one who seeks true spiritual direction will ever consider it an act of disloyalty to seek direction and guidance from another priest.

2. *Confession and direction:*

(a) They are not the same thing at all:

i. confession is a sacrament, spiritual direction is not;

ii. confession is for the forgiveness of sin; spiritual direction is a direction of souls towards perfection.

(b) From this come two conclusions:

i. confession can be separated from spiritual direction\_\_two distinct persons can be concerned here ;



ii. in confession it is enough to confess sins; in spiritual direction more is needed; one must reveal tendencies, temptations, difficulties, struggles, sacrifices, prayer, etc.

### Two categories of souls

1. Those who are simple, good, whom God calls by easy ways, by ordinary prayer, without complications of any kind. These hardly need spiritual direction, their lives are so easily ruled by divine providence.
2. Those who, by reason of their education, social position and interior problems have a more difficult life to lead. These do need spiritual direction, one who can guide them and direct them according to the will of God.

### N: Director and directed

#### The right spiritual director is hard to find

The only thing we can do is search diligendy until we find such a one.

(a) It is not necessary that he should be our confessor, although this will often be the case and where possible it is the best thing;

(b) however, a director needs certain qualities which the confessor need not possess.

#### The qualities of a good director

St Teresa of Avila refers to these in her life:

(a) He should be a master in the spiritual life and with experience; if he also has learning, so much the better;

(b) a man of prayer.

2. St Francis de Sales says that the director should be full of charity, of doctrine and prudence, because if one of these is missing, there is grave danger.

3. The great masters of the spiritual life agree that a director should have these qualities:

(a) theological knowledge, which should be more profound if he has to handle deep and difficult questions;

(b) prudence and right judgement;

(c) experience acquired through his own practice of the interior life, by direction he has himself received or by long experience in treating souls;

(d) sanctity; he is an instrument of the Holy Ghost.

### Changing one's director

1. *Important problem:*

One in which we must avoid excess and defect in our answer.

(a) There are people who are spiritually unstable, always changing director;

(b) on the other hand, spiritual direction is not a form of slavery;

(c) as in many other things, there are certain signs, both negative and positive, which may guide us.

2. *Negative signs:*

(a) The fact that he appears to treat us harshly is not, of itself, sufficient motive for a change of director;

(b) nor is the fact that we are depressed, dry in the spiritual life.

(c) St Ignatius used to say that one should not change a director either in times of dryness or in those of consolation.

3. *Positive signs:*

(a) Lack of progress in the spiritual life, either due to lack of frankness with our director, his lack of spirit, etc.

(b) It is then useful to consult a third party before doing anything.

### The one directed

1. The soul, to get the most advantage from spiritual direction, must also possess certain qualities:

(a) we must open our soul to our director with clearness and humility;

(b) be docile in accepting his guidance;

(c) in this matter it is better to speak of docility rather than obedience;

(d) we must have confidence in our director and trust him.

2. Above all, we must understand that spiritual direction does not suppress or destroy the soul's individuality:

(a) it is not slavish submission, nor total and absolute dependence;

(b) the soul has to make its own way under its own power, with the help of and under the guidance of the director.

### O: Afar off

#### At a distance from Christ

1. The Gospel presents to us ten lepers, who stood afar off from Christ and sought their cure.

2. The Fathers of the Church give this scene a spiritual significance especially St Augustine, who sees in the illness of these men the sin of ignorance and error.

3. The one Master who can cure them is Christ, who can act on their souls through the assistance and intervention of the priests.

There are many still a long way from Christ

1. In some cases among our own, Catholics by baptism, but who do not practise their religion.
2. In other cases it is indifference, error, prejudice which keeps others away from the true faith ; especially the error of our day is indifference in religious matters.
3. The one who can have most effect to bring about a cure of these varied conditions is the priest.

The priest and sinners, those in error, etc.

1. The first quality of the priest must be dedication—without this his life would be without any real effect. One truly dedicated priest, like the Curé d'Ars, is worth more to a diocese or parish than many who are not so dedicated.
2. By this dedication is meant a full realization of the needs of the parish, complete submission to authority, and above all, the knowledge that a priest is ordained for the people, to act as a mediator between man and God.
3. He must be a worker—seeking out the lost sheep wherever they are to be found; helping when possible those in error to reach the truth—by all the means at his disposal.
4. He must, above all, be a man of prayer—he is an instrument, and as such he must be closely in touch with God himself.
5. He must not expect others—especially sinners—to come to him; he must be prepared to go to them.

Three rules; prayer, study, action

1. *He should make the Mass the centre of his whole spiritual and active life:*

Round this centre should be grouped his other prayers, both public and private.

2. *He must be a man of study:*

Otherwise he will not understand the problems which face his people, nor will he know the answers to those problems. Study will aid him in preaching.

3. *His action must be:*

- (a) prudent;
- (b) fitting the circumstances of time and place, etc.;

(c) full of charity—the major quality in any priest, but especially in one who deals with sinners.

### Conclusions

1. The best—perhaps the only—way we can deal with the evils of our time and nation is through a truly dedicated priesthood, at the service of Christ all the time and with no thought of self.
2. This should be a major point in all seminary training—with special emphasis on obedience to authority as the bond which holds the diocese and parish together.



*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

## SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Galatians 5. 16-24      Gospel: Matthew 6. 24-33 (cf. Luke  
12. 22-31)

Some texts concerning Providence

1. *Providence belongs to God:*

All God's doing; his are the wisdom and the power; to him belong prudence in act and discernment. The ruins he makes, none can rebuild, his imprisonment none can escape; withholds he the rain, all is dried up; sends he rain, it floods all the ground. Yes, he is strong, he is wise; reads the knave's heart as easily as the fool's. He can thwart the counsellor, bemuse the judge, exchange the king's baldrick for the rope of a prisoner, lead the priest away ungowned, dispossess the noble, bewitch the lips that never erred, rob the elder of his prudence, bring princes into contempt, unman the strong. Job 12. 13-21.

... elsewhere, with such power at thy disposal, a lenient judge thou provest thyself, riding us with a light rein, and keeping thy terrors in reserve. Wis. 12. 18.

. . . but it is thy fatherly providence that brings her safe to port; thou hast made the sea into a high road men may travel by without harm. Wis. 14. 3.

2. *God rules and governs all:*

God, the unseen power that can thrust mountains this way and that, uproot them in his anger, can move earth from its place, and set all its pillars quaking, can prevent, with a word, the sun's rising, or imprison, under his royal seal, the very stars. Job 9. 5. Cf. *ibid.* 9. 8-13 and 22. 12-17.

3. *All are subject to his providence:*

The Lord has set up his throne in heaven, rules with universal sway. . . . Bless the Lord, all you creatures of his, in every comer of his dominion; and thou, my soul, bless the Lord. Ps. 102. 19 ff.

Bold is her (Wisdom's) sweep from world's end to world's end, and everywhere her gracious ordering manifests itself. Wis. 8. 1.

God am I, the Lord says, only when I stand near, and not when I am far away? Where, he would know, will you hide so close that he

is not watching you, he, the Lord, that fills heaven and earth? Jer. 23. 23-24. Cf. Rom. 8. 28; *ibid.* 13. 1; Apoc. 4. 11.

4. *God cares for us and feeds us:*

Do not forget the long journeying by which, for forty years, the Lord thy God led thee through the desert, testing thee by hard discipline, to know the dispositions of thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or not. . . . And now the Lord thy God means to settle thee in a fair land, a land that has water coursing down in streams, deep wells that break out from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley . . . here thou mayest eat thy fill and bless the name of the Lord thy God for the fair land he has given thee. Dt. 8. 2-11.

Cast the burden of thy cares upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee; never will he let thee stumble, his servant if thou be. Ps. 54.23.

5. *God guides our lives:*

Heart of man must plan his course, but his steps shall fall as the Lord guides them. Prov. 16. 9. Cf. Prov. 19. 21; 20. 24; 21. 1.

Not that, left to ourselves, we are able to frame any thought as coming from ourselves; all our ability comes from God. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

Both the will to do it and the accomplishment of that will are something which God accomplishes in you, to carry out his loving purpose. Phil. 2. 13.

## SERMON II. GENERAL COMMENTS

### I. LITURGICAL

We may note, with Schuster, that we are in the full period of the gathering of the harvest and that most of the inhabitants of Rome left the city and went to the suburbs to take the air and help in the harvest. Therefore today's liturgy, which insists on divine providence which feeds the birds of the air and clothes in their beauty the flowers of the field, is most opportune.

1. *Providence Sunday:*

Because the Gospel speaks so strongly on this point, today has been given the name of Providence Sunday. If we take the whole Mass into consideration it might be better called Sanctification Sunday. The sublime teaching concerning God's providence is but a means of reaching the final phrase of the Gospel, teaching us that we should first seek the kingdom of God and his justice (Matt. 6. 33). One of the great obstacles to sanctity is the concupiscence of the eyes, by which we can easily reach a point where we are over-anxious about temporal things. No man can serve two masters



(Matt. 6. 24). For this reason abandonment to God's providence helps us towards sanctification; he will solve all our problems for us, both material and temporal. All these things shall be added unto you. There is no doubt that the best method of attaining complete tranquillity and peace in this life is by making sure that God's kingdom triumphs in us. St Catherine used to say: You look after me, O Lord, and I will look after you.

2. *Invitation to the triumph of the spirit over the flesh:*

The function of the last verse of the Gospel is to interpret the Epistle, in a certain sense. The Seek you first the kingdom of God is the same in fact as the Walking according to the spirit and not according to the flesh, which is the theme of the Epistle. In the light of this teaching we can understand the Introit and the Gradual.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Galatians 5. 16-24

1. *Occasion and argument:*

It would appear that St Paul's enemies in Galatia and elsewhere were insinuating constantly that his teaching with regard to the inefficacy of the Old Law and the Christian liberty in the New were occasions for opening the door to licence. Faced with this accusation, St Paul does his best to show that, if the Christians really allow themselves to be ruled by the Spirit, that is, by his abundant inspirations, given to all within the fold, there can be no possibility of such a thing happening. Submission to the Holy Spirit excludes all concupiscence and desires of the flesh. This relationship between Christian liberty and moral life is explained frequently in Galatians (cf. 5. 13; 6. 16).

This section explains the contrast between the works of the Spirit and those of the flesh.

2. *Texts:*

(a) Learn to live and move in the spirit. . .

If the Christian walks as one who is guided by grace there is no chance that he will be led astray by his passions, which lead him along the paths of the flesh. There is a constant war between these two, and the battle ground is the soul. Man will always be tempted by the flesh and attracted by the Spirit of God ; there is open opposition between these two.

(b) it is by letting the spirit lead you that you free yourselves from the yoke of the law . . .

The sense of this verse is that one who is led by the Spirit has no need of the external threats of the law to hold him safe. He will chooses freely to serve God. This does not mean that there are no

moral laws, but that the true Christian is guided rather by an interior impulse of the spirit towards good in his keeping of the law rather than by external sanctions. St Augustine put this into the famous phrase: Love, and then do what you will, because you will neither do nor desire anything else but the will of your beloved.

(c) the works of corrupt nature . . .

St Paul does not intend to give a complete list, but it will be plain that he has in mind all the time the chief sins of the pagan world put him. This subject occurs several times in the New Testament (cf. Rom. i. 29 ff.; 2 Cor. 12. 20-21; Eph. 5. 3 ff.; Col. 3. 5). The feuds, quarrels, jealousies, etc., are mentioned as having been introduced into Galatia by St Paul's enemies. All these exclude a man from the kingdom of heaven.

(d) the fruits of the spirit:

St Paul uses the word in the singular—fruit. The first three concern our relations with God; the second group, patience, kindness and generosity, refer to our relations with our fellow Christians. The last group cover all other aspects of human relationships.

3. *Nature crucified:*

St Paul rests all he has said on a dogmatic principle. By baptism our lower nature has been buried—crucified—together with Christ. This does not mean that it will never bother us, but that it will not dominate us as it did before. We now have grace sufficient to overcome all its attacks, living in conformity with the new principle of life which has been infused into us, a life according to Christ and his spirit. Thus the Holy Ghost will bring forth fruits in good works.

4. *The lesson:*

Man is made up of body and soul. The body knows through the senses, the soul through the mind; from this arises the double source of knowledge or appetite, that of the body and its passions which desire that good known by the senses, and that of the soul, which wills the good known by the mind. In this strange co-existence of matter and spirit each part has an influence on the other. Since the knowledge through our senses is more vivid than that of the mind, it is easy to see why the sensual appetite is so strong and even violent at times.

By a free gift of God our first parents were granted freedom from this struggle, because in them the mind was always the victor over the senses, but after original sin that gift was lost, together with grace. God, through Christ, restored grace to us, thus giving us the power to overcome our lower nature once more. The grace of Christ abounds, surrounding us on all sides. Therefore one who is overcome by concupiscence has no excuse, since the Holy Spirit and his gifts have been poured out on all abundantly.



St Paul draws the conclusion in the form of a practical warning that we should walk according to the Spirit and not according to the desires of the flesh. To help us in this struggle, which will undoubtedly be a hard one since hell will re-double its efforts, there are two considerations we might think of. First there is the thought of heaven or, according to this passage of his writings, the fear of losing it through sin. The second is the thought that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and produces in us this wonderful tree with such magnificent fruits, which give us joy and interior peace.

### B: The Gospel: Matthew 6. 24-33

#### 1. *Occasion:*

Today's Gospel forms part of the Sermon on the Mount and is found in that section which deals with those who spend all their time laying up treasures on earth. It is madness to occupy oneself too much with such things, which are so open to loss or destruction, theft or death. Disciples of Christ should have a greater desire for the treasures of heaven, which are certain. If our hearts are all the time fixed on earthly things they will themselves become earthly; if our riches are in heaven, so will our hearts be also.

Christ uses the example of the eyes, as the light of the body. A man's heart is also, to a certain extent, his light, together with his affections and desires. His life will reflect them all. If they are soiled and contaminated by the lure of riches, the entire soul will soon find itself in darkness. Insisting on this, the Lord continues to explain his doctrine concerning the outlook of a true Christian with regard to these things.

#### 2. *Texts:*

(a) A man cannot be the slave of two masters at once . . .

Christ likens the inordinate love of riches to a slavery which is in opposition to the true slavery, the service of God. There is nothing in common between the service of God and slavery to riches (Luke 16. 13), which is sometimes called idolatry in the New Testament (Col. 3. 5). This idea is not exclusive to Christian thought, since Juvenal says: Among us the most sacred majesty is that of riches. Mammon—money—is not a god, but it can take on all the appearances of one, in so far as it separates us from the service of the true God and thus becomes his rival.

No reconciliation is possible between these two rivals. God is not satisfied with half of our heart; he wants it all, a heart which will love him above all things. We may love earthly things, but only in so far as they are blessings from God which should lead to God. Riches, with all the pleasures which they offer us, the avarice, injustice, and evil of all kinds to which they lead us, make it impossible for us to

serve God. It is hard to find a more total or abject slavery than that of a man who is a slave to money.

God is the only true Lord because he has made us and also redeemed us. He is generosity itself to those who serve him, but he is also a just judge to those who refuse him their service. His service may appear hard and difficult to one who does not practise it; but to one who does give himself to it, it is easy, sweet and leads to eternal happiness. The service of the world or of riches is hard indeed and leads to nothing but misery. It cannot give to those who are slaves to it more than it is itself, together with the horrors of eternal damnation. The misery of the poor consists in seeing all happiness in riches; that of the rich, in not attaining it through their money.

**(b) do not fret over your life . . .**

If, then, the service of money can and does separate us from God, both rich and poor alike must be careful not to have an excessive love for the things of this world, since this inordinate affection, even in small things, can easily become a real slavery.

The emphasis is on not being over-anxious, not to fret. This obviously does not exclude ordinary thought for the future and a reasonable preoccupation about such things as our work and wages, as St Augustine had to point out on more than one occasion in his writings on the work done by monks. Some of them, resting their arguments on these words of Christ, tried to exclude all work from the monastery. It is not work which has to be excluded, since it is one of the greatest means of sanctification. God has given us the earth that it may sustain life on condition that we wring its good things from it by work. What must be excluded is the worldly mentality of those who cannot see further than material things.

In opposition to this way of thinking Christ gives us seven points to think about. The first, contained in the opening words of this verse, is based on the fact that it is God who looks after our body; the second, in verse 26, teaches us by example how God cares for the birds of the air and feeds them; in verse 27 we are shown how useless this over-anxiety is without God's help; the fourth, in verse 28, takes another example, this time from the flowers of the field; the fifth, in verse 32, tells us that such thoughts are only proper to heathens; the sixth, in the same verse, tells us that we have a Father in heaven, on whom we can rely to feed us and look after us in every way. Lastly, in verse 34, we are told that today's troubles are enough; why add to them by over-anxiety?

**(c) the birds of the air . . .**

St Luke talks about ravens, but in any case, the interesting thing is the doctrine, beautifully expressed by St Ambrose (on St Luke 12. 24). The ravens, who do not work, have all they need and they have

it in abundance, because they do not know how to reduce to private ownership the fruits which have been given them in common, so that all may eat. We, on the other hand, lose what is common to all because we are always trying to make it private. We lose it because we never manage to make it ours, since it will not last for ever nor do we ever have such an abundance that the future is certain for us. Why then do you insist on thinking that your riches are really yours, when God wills that your table should be a common one?

(d) can any of you . . . add a cubit's growth to his height?

The correct reading may be: can any of you . . . add a quarter of an hour to his life?

(e) and why should you be anxious over clothing?

Here our Lord mentions the wild lilies—the word stands for any wild flower, and we can see Christ's appreciation of the beauty of created nature. To doubt God's Providence is to leave ourselves open to the accusation of being men of little faith. Verse 31 is a condensation of all that has gone before. He goes on to say that it is proper to the heathen to think in this way. This is a call to the Jewish mind. They considered themselves to be so much better than the Gentiles around them. Those heathens think like this because they do not know that God is their Father, nor do they realize that, as a Father, he must take care of his sons, and since he is infinitely perfect none of our needs escape his wisdom, none is beyond his power (1 Pet. 5. 7; Phil. 4. 6).

The history of Israel shows us this truth clearly. When they were subjected to the great empires the message of the prophets to them was simply this: Do not join with these peoples; have confidence in God. They lacked that confidence and made an alliance with Egypt. They were subjected to the captivity for that very reason.

(f) Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God . . .

This is Christ's real message and a compendium of his whole teaching. The Christian should seek first the kingdom of God and its justice, just as Christ had preached it. If we do seek that kingdom above all other things, then God will look after all our bodily needs in so far as they are necessary to seek and attain that kingdom. It is not a promise that God will reward our services with material riches. The unfortunate thing is that the poor do not seek that kingdom as they ought, neither do the rich. Since the rich do not seek it, the poor suffer. Since the poor do not seek it, they expose themselves to a poverty which is caused by man's bad faith and occasionally to spiritual poverty—the loss of heaven.



## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

## I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(A summary of his two Homilies Nos. 21 and 22 on the Gospel of St Matthew.)

1. *Money and God:*

## (a) The tyranny of avarice:

What could be worse than this threat of Christ, that riches can separate us from his love? And what could be more wonderful than the thought that, by despising them, we can gain that love, friendship and union with him? It is not merely a question of riches attracting thieves, or because they reduce our minds to the level of the brutes, but mainly because they separate us from God's service that he warns us not to pay too much attention to them. They make you the captive of dead things, servants of that very thing whose master you should be, and they remove you from God, whose servant you ought to be with joy. No man can serve two masters, i.e. two who demand contrary things.

## (b) You cannot serve God and money:

We should feel horror at the thought that we have made Christ compare God and money, the dictatorship of gold and the fear of God. You might say that this happened also in olden times, quoting the example of Abraham and Job. Do not quote rich men to me, but those who worshipped riches. Certainly neither Abraham nor Job did that. Job was rich, but instead of being ruled by his wealth, he dominated it and that is why he did not mind when he lost it. Not thus are the rich of today, rather there are no slaves so much in servitude as they, who pay constant tribute to money as to a tyrant. Once the love of money has taken possession of the fortress of the soul it sends out daily orders full of injustice, and there is no one who dares to disobey them.

## (c) There is no excuse:

God has given his decision once for all—it is impossible to serve these two at one and the same time. *If one* commands you to rob and the other to deprive yourself of what is your own; *if one* orders chastity and the other fornication; one drunken orgies and the other a rein on the appetite; one luxurious living and the other the despising of such things—how can these two be served at the same time?

## (d) The evils of avarice:

God calls money a master not by reason of its nature, but because of the misery of those who humble themselves before it. In the same way he calls the belly god, because those who serve it become like



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brutes. To show us that it is possible to fulfil his command and despise these things he adds: Do not fret over your life, how to support it with food and drink. And so that no one will be able to argue against those words, saying that, if they give up all things, how can they possibly live, he goes on: Is not life itself a greater gift than food, the body than clothing ? He who gave you what is greater will not be lacking in what is less important.

(e) Over-anxiety to be avoided, not ordinary care:

If God takes such good care of those things which have been created for our use, he will have greater care of us. That is why Christ quotes the case of the birds of the air; he did not add: because they do no fraud in their operations of buying and selling, but: they never sow or reap. What then? Should we not sow? He did not say that, but told us not to be anxious, over-solicitous; he did not say we should not work, but that we should not torment ourselves with cares. Just as he told us to feed our bodies, but not with gluttony.

(f) A reason:

If these words are not enough to get you to give up this anxiety, think of the uselessness of such things and give up this over-anxiety. Can any of you, for all his anxiety, add a cubit's growth to his height ? Do you not see how, by means of some clear example, he shows you the truth about something not quite so clear ? It is not your effort so much, but the workings of divine providence which carries things out to their logical end, even though we may think we have sufficient power to do it by ourselves. If that providence were to abandon us, nothing we do would be of any use.

(g) The moral lesson:

Learn to avoid two things, avarice and laziness, convinced that almsdeeds is an excellent work. If we make a practice of it we shall soon learn to think less of the things of this world in comparison with heaven. Just as John the Baptist told the soldiers to be content with their pay (Luke 3. 14) we too have to begin with small things like these, because as yet we are not all ready for voluntary poverty. If we cannot do this then what pardon can we expect, who will be then inferior to the heathens and the Gentile philosophers ? What excuse shall we offer if, instead of being angels and sons of God, we do not even remain human ? To steal or to covet the goods of others is not proper to man's meekness, but to brute beasts. At least we can and must practise poverty<sup>7</sup> of spirit.

### 2. *Divine providence:*

(a) God's immense solicitude for man:

After telling us to think of the flowers of the field, objects of God's care, our Lord adds: Will he not be much more ready to clothe you ?

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It is as if he had said: You to whom he gave a soul, whose body he shaped, for whom he created all things, to whom he sent the prophets and to whom he gave the Law, finally sending his only Son for you—of what great value are you.

### (b) The reason for the beauty of creatures:

To show forth the glory and the power of God, together with his wisdom; for it is not only the heavens which show forth his glory (Ps. 150. 2) but also the earth (Ps. 148. 9-10). All things praise him, some by their fruits, others by their majesty and beauty. It is a sure sign of wisdom and majesty to pour out so much beauty on things which are so lowly. For what is more lowly than something which is today, and tomorrow is not? If God does such great things for these lowly creatures, how much more will he do for you, the highest of his visible creation.

### (c) Confidence in our Father:

After saying that they—and we too—are men of little faith, he gives us words of great consolation when he tells us: You have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all. He does not say: You have a God in heaven, but a Father, to give us greater confidence. He gives us a double motive, because first of all, such a Father could not observe the needs of his sons without doing something about it, and secondly, he shows us that the very reason we appear to have for our over-anxiety is really a reason for laying it on one side.

The reason and excuse we make for ourselves is that these things are necessary for us. He tells us that, precisely because they are necessary and our Father knows it, we should lay our cares and our solicitude on him with confidence.

### (d) Seek heaven first:

Once he has freed the soul from this over-anxiety he reminds it of heaven. He wishes to lead us to our real home, that is why he lays hands on everything possible in order to get us to despise the things of this life in favour of those above. That is also the reason why he mentions the Gentiles, people who take no thought to the future life and give their hearts to this earthly one. We were not created to eat, drink, and dress lavishly; but to praise God, serve him and so acquire eternal goods.

### (e) The providence of God superior to the love of all fathers :

Because he commands this to free us from superfluous cares. If you are anxious about tomorrow now', today—then tomorrow again you will be equally anxious. Of what use is this superfluous anxiety? Why do you demand from one day that it should do the work of two or more? It will not subtract anything from tomorrow's cares. The

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day has been given to you that you should make use of it; why then cast on its shoulders the cares of tomorrow?

We are twisting the divine order of things. He tells us not to seek earthly foods and we spend all our time doing just that; he orders us instead to search for heaven and its rewards and we refrain from it. Is it not certain that one day we shall have to leave all this, to fall into the hands of our judge? Putting things off is no real help, because what help is there in waiting day by day for the punishment to come? If you wish to take advantage of this delay, use it for emendation and penance. If we will but have a sincere will, we can fulfil his commands; they are not difficult or hard, really. Penance and good resolutions are the key to our success.

(f) Pray, but pray well:

Some people say that they pray but are not heard. They have not prayed as the pagan woman did for the cure of her daughter, or like the friend who arrived late at night to ask for bread for his guest, or the widow who importuned the judge, or the prodigal son. A true father, however offended, does not wish to take justice on his son, but to see him repent and suppliant.

If we would only burn with the same love which moves him! That fire demands but a spark, and with that spark we can light a great fire. If we, who are evil, are merciful to our children even when they offend us, how much so God, who cannot be harmed by our insults, feels them for our sake. If we love by our very nature, how much more God, who is supreme love?

For these and many other reasons we should not be discouraged; rather in the light of such hopes, even though we sin each and every day, we should go to him, asking of him on our knees repentance and forgiveness for our sins. Thus it will be more difficult for us to sin in the future, we shall cast out Satan and excite the mercy of God. We shall attain the grace and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

### Providence and human needs

(From Chap, xiv and xvi of Bk. II on the *Sermon on the Mount*. PL. 34, 1290-1293.)

No man can serve two masters, is to be referred to this very intention, as Christ goes on to explain: either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will devote himself to the one and despise the other. And who the two masters are he immediately shows. You must serve God or money, you cannot serve both. Riches are said to be called mammon among the Hebrews. . . . But he who serves mammon certainly serves him who is called by our Lord the



prince of this world, as being set over these earthly things by reason of his evil nature. A man will, then, either hate this one and love the other, i.e. God; or he will devote himself to the one and despise the other. For whoever serves mammon devotes himself to a hard and ruinous master; for being entangled by his own lust, he becomes a subject of the devil, and yet he does not love him. For who can love the devil ? But he submits to him; even as in any large house, he who is intimate with another's maid-servant submits to hard bondage on account of his passion, even though he does not love the man whose servant he loves.

He will despise the other, Christ says. He does not say that he will hate, for no one's conscience can hate God ; but he despises, i.e. he does not fear him, as though he felt himself secure because of God's goodness. From this careless presumption the Holy Spirit recalls us when he says to us, through the prophet: Do not add sin upon sin; and say not: The mercy of the Lord is great (Ecclus. 5. 5-6); and also: Or is it that thou art presuming on that abundant kindness of his, which bears with thee and waits for thee ? (Rom. 2. 4). For whose mercy can be mentioned as great as his, who pardons all who return and who makes the wild olive partake of the richness of the true stock ? And whose severity is as great as his, who spared not the natural branches, but broke them off because of their unbelief (Rom. 11. 17-24). But let not that man, whoever he may be, who wishes to love God and to beware of offending him, suppose that he can serve two masters; rather let him have a simple, undivided loyalty. Thus he will think of the Lord with an upright heart and in the simplicity of that heart will seek him.

Do not fret over your life, how to support it with food and drink ... he says. Here he shows most manifestly that these things are not to be sought as if they were our blessings in such a way that, on account of them, we ought to do well in all our actions, but yet that they are necessary. For he has shown the difference between a blessing which is to be sought and a necessary thing which is to be taken for use, when he adds: Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God, and his approval, and all these things shall be yours without the asking. The kingdom and the approval *of God*, then, are our good; these are to be sought, and they are the purpose and motive on account of which we are to do everything we do. But because we serve as soldiers in this life, in order that we may be able to reach that kingdom, and because our life cannot be spent without these necessities, therefore he says: They shall be yours without the asking; only make it your first care to find the kingdom of God and his approval. In using that word : First, he has indicated that other things are to be sought later, not in point *of time*, but in importance. The former as being our good, the latter as being something necessary for us on account of that good.



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### HI. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(Summary of his *Homily 5 in Matt*, concerning the giving up of creatures and abandonment to God's providence.)

You have heard how Peter and Andrew, at one word from the Lord, left their nets and followed him. As yet they had not seen any of his miracles, nor had they heard a word from his lips about an eternal reward; yet at his command they forgot all they possessed. How many miracles we witness, with how many dire punishments are we afflicted or threatened, and yet with all this we are not prepared to follow the one who calls us ! . . . Our proud hearts do not wish to give up freely that which, against our will, we are losing every day! What shall we say at the day of judgement, we who will not separate our hearts from the love of this world, in spite of the commands to do so, nor do penance in our woes ?

Perhaps someone will say within himself: What was it after all that these two fishermen gave up at the word of the Lord ? They had practically no possessions. In this matter we have to take more into consideration the affection of the heart than material values. He gave up much who reserved nothing for himself; he gave up much who gave up all things, no matter how small. Certainly, we look with affection on those things we possess, and what we still lack as yet we seek with ardent desire. Therefore Peter and Andrew gave up a great deal because they abandoned even the desire to possess anything. . . . Let no one say, on seeing that others have given up a great deal: I, too, would like to imitate those who despise this world, but I have nothing to give. You will give up a great deal if you renounce earthly desires. The Lord is pleased with our offering, no matter how small, for he looks at the intention, not at the material value of the thing. He does not consider how much is given, but rather the fervour with which it is given. If we look at the material value merely, then these great saints bought the eternal life of the angels for some miserable nets and a poor boat. The kingdom of God has no fixed price, because it is worth all that you have. It cost Zachaeus half of all that he possessed—he kept the other half to make restitution; it cost Peter and Andrew their nets and boat; the widow woman purchased it for a few pence; another obtained it by the gift of a glass of cold water.

Think, then, how cheap it is when purchased and how costly once it is possessed. . . . There is nothing so precious in God's sight as good will. This good will feels the misery of others as if it were our own, delights in another's good as if it were ours while it takes the sorrows of others on its own shoulders. To love friends, not for oneself but for God; to suffer enemies even with kindness; not to do to others what we would not like them to do to us; to administer

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to the needs of others, not merely to the limit of our power but even beyond. What better sacrifice than this, provided that, with it, the soul gives up its very heart to God, making a sacrifice of itself.

But this sacrifice of the will can never be complete unless it includes a giving up of the affection for things of this world, because all that we desire of it we undoubtedly envy when we see it in others, thinking that they have something which should, by right, be ours. And since envy is the enemy of good will, once it takes possession of the soul the latter separates itself from God. That is why saintly preachers, in order to have perfect love for their neighbour, took d care beforehand not to have atty affection for the things of this world, not desiring anything here below and not to possess anything.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### The Fruits of the Spirit

(An important subject, but one usually set aside by preachers because they regard it as too difficult for their hearers. These general ideas, taken from the doctrine of St Thomas, may help.)

##### 1. *Definition:*

Virtue is possessed and cultivated in view of the good actions which fructify therefrom. Acts are, by metaphor, called the fruits of virtue when they carry with them, like the products of the garden trees, a certain delectation. When, owing to the soul's docility to the Holy Spirit dwelling within it, the supernatural infused virtues fructify in virtuous acts having savour and pleasantness in the doing of them, rightly are such good acts termed the fruits of the Holy Ghost (cf. I. 2. q. 70 a. 1).

Sometimes the names of the virtues are applied to their acts: thus Ambrose writes: Faith is to believe what thou seest not; and: Charity is the movement of the soul in loving God and our neighbour. It is thus that the names of the virtues are used in reckoning the fruits. . . . Fruits are any virtuous deeds in which one delights (cf. *ibid*, ad 3 and *art.* 2. c).

##### 2. *Number:*

The difference between these fruits must be gathered from the various ways in which the Holy Ghost proceeds in us; which process consists in this, that the mind of man is set in order, first of all, in regard to itself; secondly in regard to things that are near it; thirdly, in regard to things that are below it.

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Accordingly man's mind is well disposed in regard to itself when it has a good disposition towards good things and towards evil things. Now the first disposition of the human mind towards the good is effected by love, which is the root of them all . . . wherefore among the fruits of the Holy Ghost we reckon charity, where the Holy Ghost is given in a special manner, as in his own likeness, since he himself is love. . . .

The necessary result of love is joy; because every lover rejoices at being united to the beloved. . . .

Now the perfection of joy is peace in two respects; first as regards freedom from outward disturbances . . . secondly as regards the calm of the restless desire; for he does not perfectly rejoice who is not satisfied with the object of his desire; for he does not perfectly rejoice who is not satisfied with the object of his joy. Now, peace implies these two things, namely, that we be not disturbed by external things, and that our desires rest altogether in one object. Wherefore after charity and joy, peace is given the third place.

In evil things the mind has a good disposition in respect of two things. First, by not being disturbed whenever evil threatens, which pertains to patience; secondly, by not being disturbed whenever good things are delayed; which belongs to long-suffering, since to lack good is a kind of evil.

Man's mind is well disposed as regards what is near to him, viz. his neighbour, first as to the will to do good; and to this belongs goodness. Secondly, as to the execution of well-doing; and to this belongs benignity, for the benign are those in whom the salutary flame of love has enkindled the desire to be kind to their neighbour. Thirdly, as to his suffering with equanimity the evils his neighbour inflicts on him. To this belongs meekness, which curbs anger. Fourthly, in the point of our refraining from doing harm to our neighbour, not only through anger, but also through fraud or deceit. To this pertains faith, if we take it as denoting fidelity. But if we take it for the faith whereby we believe in God, then man is directed to that which is above him, so that he subjects his intellect and, consequently, all that is his, to God.

Man is well disposed in respect of that which is below him, as regards external action, by modesty, whereby we observe the mode in all our words and deeds; as regards internal desires, by continency and chastity: whether these two differ because chastity withdraws man from unlawful desires, continency also from lawful desires; or because the continent man is subject to concupiscence, but is not led away; whereas the chaste man is neither subject to, nor led away by them.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

## I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

The way to heaven, and the kingdom of God

1. *Seeking the kingdom:*

For my own part I had not doubted that poverty was the soundest basis for a foundation. I had been wishing for days that it were possible for a person in my state of life to go about begging for love of God and have no house or other possessions. But I was afraid that, if others were not given these desires by the Lord, they would live in a state of discontent, and also that the thing would cause some distraction. I had seen a number of poor monasteries in which there was no great degree of recollection, and it had not occurred to me that their distraction was not due to their poverty, but that their poverty was due to their not being recollected. Distraction does not make people richer and God never fails those who serve him. In short, my faith was weak, whereas the faith of this servant of God [Dona Luisa de la Cerda] was not.

I sought the opinion of a great many people with regard to all this but found hardly anyone who shared my own—neither my confessor nor the learned men whom I consulted about it. They put before me so many contrary arguments that I did not know what to do; for, now that I had learned the nature of the Rule and realized that its way is that of greater perfection, I could not persuade myself to allow the house to have any revenue. True, they sometimes convinced me; but when I betook myself to prayer again and looked at Christ hanging naked on the Cross, I felt I could not bear to be rich. So I besought him with tears to bring it about that I might become as poor as he.

I found that the possession of revenue entailed so many inconveniences, and was such a cause of unrest, and even of distraction, that I kept on disputing about it with learned men. I wrote to that effect to the Dominican friar who was helping us, and he answered me in a letter two sheets long, full of refutations and theology; in this he told me that he had made a close study of the subject, and tried to dissuade me from my project. I replied that I had no wish to make use of theology and should not thank him for his learning in this matter if it was going to keep me from following my vocation, from being true to the vow of poverty that I had made, and from observing Christ's precepts with due perfection. . . .

It was at this time that, through my entreaties, for the lady had never seen him, the Lord was pleased that the saintly Fray Peter of Alcantara should come to her house. As one who was a great lover of poverty and had practised it for so many years, he knew how much



wealth there was in it, and so he was a great help to me and told me that I must carry out my plan without fail. Once I had his opinion and help, which, as he had the advantage of a long experience, none was better able to give, I resolved to seek no further opinions.

One day, when I was earnestly commending my plan to God, the Lord told me that I must on no account fail to found the convent in poverty, for that was his Father's will, and his own will, and he would help me. . . . On another occasion he told me that money led only to confusion, and said other things in praise of poverty, and assured me that none would ever lack the necessities of life if they served him. . . .

O my Lord, how abundantly dost thou manifest thy power! There is no need to seek reasons for what thou wilt, for thou dost transcend all natural reasons and make all things possible, thus showing clearly that we have only to love thee truly, and truly to forsake everything for thee, and thou, my Lord, wilt make everything easy.... He who truly loves thee, my God, travels by a broad and a royal road and travels securely. It is far away from any precipice, and hardly has such a man stumbled in the slightest degree when thou, Lord, givest him thy hand. One fall—and even many falls, if he loves thee and not the things of the world—will not be enough to lead him to perdition; he will be travelling along the valley of humility. I cannot understand why it is that people are afraid to set out upon the way of perfection. May the Lord, for his name's sake, make us realize how unsafe we are amid such manifest perils as beset us when we follow the crowd, and how our true safety lies in striving to press ever forward on the way of God. Our eyes must be fixed upon him, and we must not be afraid that this Sun of Justice will set, or that he will allow us to travel by night, and so be lost, unless we first forsake him.

People are not afraid to walk among lions, each of which seem to be trying to tear them to pieces—I mean among honours, delights and pleasures (as the world calls them) of that kind. The devil seems to be frightening us with scarecrows here. A thousand times have I been amazed by this; fain would I weep ten thousand times, till I could weep no more, and fain would I cry aloud to tell everyone of my great blindness and wickedness, in the hope that this might be of some avail to open their eyes (*Life*, chap. 35).

## 2. *The good that comes from true poverty:*

Do not think, my sisters, that because you do not go about trying to please people in the world you will lack for food. You will not, I assure you: never try to sustain yourselves by human artifices, or you will die of hunger and rightly so. Keep your eyes fixed upon your Spouse; it is for him to sustain you; and if he is pleased with

you, even those who like you least will give you food, if unwillingly, as you have found by experience. If you should do as I say and yet die of hunger, then happy are the nuns of St Joseph's. For the love of the Lord, let us not forget this; you have forgone a regular income; forgo worry about food as well, or you will lose everything. Let those whom the Lord wishes to live on an income do so; if that is their vocation, they are perfectly justified; but for us to do so, sisters, would be inconsistent....

Poverty' is good, and contains within itself all the good things in the world. It is a great domain—I mean that he who cares nothing for the good things of the world has dominion over them all. What do kings and lords matter to me if I have no desire to possess their money, or to please them, if by so doing I should cause the least displeasure to God? And what do their honours mean to me if I have realized that the chief honour of a poor man consists in his being really and truly poor?

For my own part, I believe that honour and money nearly always go together, and that he who desires honour never hates money, while he who hates money cares little for honour. Understand this clearly, for I think this concern about honour always implies some slight regard for endowments or money; seldom or never is a poor man honoured by the world; however worthy of honour he may be, he is apt rather to be despised by it. With true poverty there goes a different kind of honour to which nobody can take objection. I mean that, if poverty is embraced for God's sake alone, no one has to be pleased save God (*Way of Perfection*, chap. 2).

## II. ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

### The evil done by inordinate desires in the soul

#### I. *They darken and blind it:*

The third evil that the desires cause in the soul is that they blind and darken it. Even as vapours darken the air and allow not the bright sun to shine; or as a mirror that is clouded over cannot receive within itself a clear image; or as water defiled by mud reflects not the visage of one that looks therein; even so the soul that is wounded by the desires is darkened in the understanding and allows neither the sun of natural reason nor that of the supernatural Wisdom of God to shine upon it and illuminate it clearly. ...

#### 2. *They affect the will:*

And at this time, when the soul is darkened in the understanding, it is benumbed also in the will, and the memory becomes dull and disordered in its due operation. For, as these faculties in their operation depend upon the understanding, it is clear that, when

the understanding is impeded, they will become disordered and troubled.. .. For as we say, the understanding has no more capacity for receiving enlightenment from the wisdom of God than has the air, when it is dark, for receiving enlightenment from the sun; neither has the will any power to embrace God within itself in pure love, even as a mirror that is clouded with vapour has no power to reflect clearly within itself any visage, and even less power has the memory which is clouded by desire to take clearly upon itself the form of the image of God, just as the muddied water cannot show forth clearly the visage of one who looks at himself therein... .

i.

For this reason one must lament greatly the ignorance of certain men who burden themselves with extraordinary penances and with many other voluntary exercises, and think that this practice or that will suffice to bring them to the union of Divine Wisdom; but such will not be the case if they voluntarily endeavour diligently to mortify their desires. If they were careful to bestow half of that labour on this, they would profit more in a month than they profit by all the other practices in many years. For, just as it is necessary to till the earth if it is to bear fruit, and unless it be tilled it bears nothing but weeds, just so mortification of the desires is necessary if the soul is to profit. Without this mortification I make bold to say that the soul no more makes progress on the road to perfection and to the knowledge of God and of itself, however many efforts it may make, than the seed grows when it is cast upon untilled ground. Wherefore the darkness and the rudeness of the soul will not be taken from it until the desires be quenched. . . .

### 3. *The road to travel:*

Upon this road we must ever journey in order to attain our goal; which means that we must ever be mortifying our desires and not indulging them. And if they are not all completely mortified we shall not completely attain. . . . So exactly does God deal with certain souls; though he has taken them out of the world and has slain the giants of their sins and destroyed the multitude of their enemies, which are the occasions of sin they had in the world, solely that they may enter this Promised Land of divine union with greater liberty, yet they harbour friendship and make alliance with the insignificant peoples—that is, with imperfections—and mortify them not completely. Therefore our Lord is angry, and allows them to fall back into their desires and go from bad to worse (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, I, XVIII).

## HI. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

We must manage our affairs with care, but without anxiety

The care and diligence we should have in our affairs are very different from solicitude, anxiety and eagerness. The angels have a



care for our salvation, and occupy themselves with it diligently, but for all that, they have no solicitude, anxiety or eagerness. . . . Be careful then, my Philothea, in all the affairs which you have in your charge, for God, having entrusted them to you, wills you to have a great care of them. But if it be possible, do not be solicitous or anxious about them—that is to say, do not undertake them with disquietude, anxiety and eagerness. Do not be eager about your work, for every kind of eagerness destroys reason and judgement, and even hinders us from doing the thing well.

When our Lord rebuked Martha he said: Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and art troubled about many things. See you, if she had been simply careful, she would not have been troubled; but because she w'as anxious and solicitous, she became eager and troubled, and therefore the Lord rebuked her. The rivers which flow gently through the plains bear great ships and rich merchandise, and the rain which falls gently on the fields makes them fruitful in grass and corn; but the torrents and rivers which rush violently over the ground ruin the land that is near them and are useless for traffic, just as the very heavy and tempestuous rain lays waste the fields and meadows. Never was work well done which was done with impetuosity and eagerness.... Receive, then, in peace, the affairs which fall to your lot, and try to dispatch them in an orderly manner, one after the other; for if you seek to dispatch them all together, or without order, your efforts will weigh you down and weaken your spirit, and ordinarily you will be crushed down under the burden and will be unable to effect anything.

And in all your affairs rely wholly on the providence of God, to which alone all your plans owe their success; nevertheless work quite tranquilly on your part to co-operate with it, and then believe that, if you have put your trust in God, the result will be always the most profitable for you, though it may seem to you good or bad according to your own judgement.

Do as little children do, who with one hand cling to their father and with the other gather strawberries or blackberries along the hedges; for in like manner, while you are gathering and handling the goods of this world with one hand, cling fast always with the other to the hand of your heavenly Father, turning to him from time to time, to see if your doings or your occupations be pleasing to him. And above all things, be careful not to let go of his hand and his protection, thinking to amass or to gather more; for if he abandons you, you will not take a single step without falling on your face. (Extracts from *Introduction to the Devout Life*, P. 3, chap. 10).



#### IV. BOSSUET

##### The two great evils of ambition

(Summary of a sermon preached on the 4th Sunday of Lent.)

St Augustine says that true happiness lies in two things, having the power to attain what one desires and desiring only what we should. The second part is more important than the first. Yet we often separate the two and seek only for the former, i.e. the power to attain what we desire.

Yet of what use is power if it is at the orders of a disordered will? Then it only serves to increase our misfortune. To add execution to our evil desires is like putting poison into a mortal wound. Christ recognized that Pilate had great power. Had his will been ordered he would never have committed the crime of deicide. This is the last blindness of all and the worst, that before putting our desires in order we desire the power to achieve them, a power which is only used against ourselves.

God teaches us to put our desires in order before even dreaming of satisfying them. Happiness is made up of two elements, good-will and power. God gives both of these to his servants, but at different times, i.e. if here below we desire only what we should, then we shall have the power to do everything we wish in the next life. The mistake is to seek power in this life, to which it does not belong. We are strangers and pilgrims here; why therefore should we seek great power in a country which is not our true home? If we do the will of our Father in heaven, allowing ourselves to be ruled by justice, then the kingdom will come one day and we shall share in its power.

In the case of Joseph and the Egyptian's wife we see the slave who is not master of his own actions and the mistress who cannot even govern her desires. Which is the greater slavery? Yet a thousand tyrants such as this assail our will and make it captive; we do not even feel sorry for it. On the contrary, we weep when our hands are tied, but we suffer in silence when our heart is in chains.

Ambition is incompatible with the true service of God, because it leads us to many vices and sins. Indeed vices increase with power. Therefore Augustine says that one of the best ways of curing the evil will is to deprive it of power to execute its designs. In truth, we become tired of wanting the impossible, of giving way to desires which cannot be attained and of not enjoying anything but the inner malice of vice. Evil frustrated begins to displease us; our very impotence makes us reflect and inclines us finally to modify our desires. This is done of necessity at first, but later we do it seriously and in good faith, blessing our lack of power which has been the first medicine to cure us.

We are like children, who need discipline—the discipline of fear or of difficult}'. If these two impediments are removed our corrupt inclinations begin to raise their heads at once. When a man sees no power above his own then his desires grow more vicious every day and more subtle. From this are born those unheard of vices, monsters of ambition, refinements of lust, pride unmentionable. They have been produced by an excess of liberty, the mother of all vices.

Ambitious men will tell us that it is necessary to stand out from the crowd, while to remain in the throng is a sign of weakness; that genius is always outstanding. There are many answers one could give to this fallacious argument. It might be pointed out that, in this world, good and evil are mixed in such a way that at times it is hard to distinguish one from the other; but a time will come in which we shall see who has been the truly saintly, the truly ambitious. We might reply by telling them there is little use in being outstanding in a world in which death reduces all to the same state.

Perhaps the best reply is that of the Scriptures, which show us in no uncertain terms the evil ways by which power is attained. The Book of Wisdom describes the unjust man putting the just in chains (2. 12). In truth, the just are of no use to the ambitious man, nor can they ever scale the heights of power. The wicked man bends whenever his ambition demands it, he serves whoever has to be served. The good, on the other hand, lack this flexibility, he becomes useless to the ambitious, who end by despising him. Virtue, in the midst of the intrigues of this world, is reduced to a cold mediocrity, which is hardly able to move along the right path which it has itself traced out, and in which it has cut off with one blow many of the ways by which worldly men are wont to rise to power. The way of the ambitious is shameful; but that of virtue is too long. The evil man knows how to move rapidly and by all means to attain his end. If you wish to rise to power you will soon find that the slow step of virtue tires you.

Live contented to be what you are, and above all, never allow the desire to do good lead you to become ambitious, because that is ambition's greatest act of deceit. Always complaining about the way the world is being ruled, such men become reformers of abuses, severe critics of all who occupy high stations. What wonderful plans they make! What beautiful ideas for ruling the State, what zeal for the Church and what saintly rulers of a diocese they would become! And all they do really, in the midst of such charitable desires, is become contaminated with the spirit of this world, and should they attain their goal, then they discover that either they advance slowly or not at all. All their good resolutions vanish and their high thoughts ■with them.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

The main anxiety of the Christian

The kingdom of God

1. Today's Gospel tells us to make it our first care to find the kingdom of God, and his approval. But what is meant by the kingdom of God ?

2. It has three meanings, the eternal glory of the blessed, the Church, the external and visible kingdom of Christ, and sanctifying grace.

(a) It can mean the Church triumphant, the external Church or interior sanctification by grace. It is in this latter sense that we shall understand it here.

(b) In this way the phrase of today's Gospel comes to mean, find first God's kingdom by realizing his plan for your sanctification in your soul. Or, to put it another way, the kingdom of God is hatred of sin, a constant disposition of soul to obey God and to keep his commandments, an increasing desire to love him above all things.

The first thing—the kingdom of God

1. *A rational and logical norm of conduct:*

(a) When our activity is directed towards objects of different value it is convenient to put some order in them, order of importance.

(b) In man the supernatural must be placed before the natural, the spiritual before the material, the spirit before the flesh.

2. *This is the command of the Master in the Sermon on the Mount:*

(a) It is not possible to serve two masters.

(b) Preoccupation with material things can impede or harm the spiritual. First things first is the only possible rule.

(c) Attend first to our sanctification and spiritual life, then abandon ourselves to Divine Providence, who will look after us as he does the flowers and the birds of the air.

The Christian's preoccupation

1. All this must be the first care of the Christian, otherwise he is no more than a follower of Christ in name only.

2. In the Epistle the apostle preaches the same doctrine but in different words:

(a) It is not possible to be guided by both the flesh and the spirit, because there is a struggle between them;



(b) in baptism the Holy Spirit was infused into us; the devil driven out;

(c) then we renounced Satan and all his works and pomps; we were given the white vestment with the charge to keep it unsullied until the day of Christ;

(d) we became part of Christ and his Mystical Body, with the order to live by the spirit, to fight, to share in the cross.

3. The counsels of St Paul in today's Epistle are no more than an echo of the doctrine of Christ; a necessary consequence of our Christian condition. As Christians we are bound to walk according to the spirit, and also we have to crucify our flesh, with its vices and concupiscence.

4. This means to seek the kingdom of God within us, as we have interpreted that in this scheme. Both Gospel and Epistle do no more than explain in different words our fundamental obligation which we contracted when we were baptized.

#### The duty of every day

1. While we are Christians we have to take care to see to it that the kingdom of Christ reigns in us. Whenever we go to Mass we should renew the thought of our vocation, hearing once more the voice of the Lord as he says to us: Find the Kingdom of God.

2. He who seeks God can live in perfect confidence that nothing will be lacking to him. It is not an easy task; human nature is frail; that is the whole purpose and meaning of the Collect of today's Mass, in which the Church begs God to look after her and her members, so that, with his help, they may keep away from harmful things and seek those which are salutary, because without that help human frailty will fall.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### Chastity

#### Chastity against lust

1. The theme is one of interest, if we take into consideration our materialized civilization, in which all is permitted.

2. This virtue has been called angelic because it makes men like the angels.

3. *Three types of chastity:*

(a) virginal—that is by vow;

(b) chastity which forbids carnal pleasures outside marriage;

(c) conjugal—which permits them within the limits imposed by marriage.



4. The object of chastity is to regulate the carnal and sensual appetite.

5. Impurity—the contrary vice—is a lack of control in the matter of these carnal and sensual pleasures.

(a) Even though such sins are not, in themselves, the worst of all, still, as St Thomas says, they can be the most grave in their consequences.

(b) It is a vice which is widespread, because it is of the flesh, and men carry that always with them; also because the life of the world is carnal and sensual.

(c) For this reason it is necessary to preach on this theme from time to time.

### A supernatural infused virtue

1. It has as its foundation the infusion of the divine life into us (as part of the virtue of temperance) and is the direct result of the triumph of the spirit over the flesh.

2. It is also one of the fruits of the spirit; in this sense it is an action of the virtue of charity, produced with ease and pleasure through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### Two aspects of this virtue—negative and positive

#### 1. *Negative:*

(a) a dislike of all that may affect the sensual appetite and free it from the dominion of the reason;

(b) this dislike is produced by a knowledge of the harm done by such things and their incompatibility with divine things;

(c) in this fashion the pure man separates himself from such things, mortifies the flesh, sets aside anything which might excite the sensual appetite.

#### 2. *Positive:*

(a) the plenitude of the spirit;

(b) a pure attitude to things—all things; that of a man who does not need to hide from God's face as Adam did after his sin;

(c) this is the patrimony of a soul which is full of love for God; something which the proud and cold-hearted man can never possess.

### Means to preserve chastity

#### i. *Prayer:*

(a) As the spiritual life increases in us, so will this virtue as well; therefore all the means which conduce to a greater depth in our spiritual life also conduce to preserve and increase our purity.

(b) In other words, it is a gift of God, and like other gifts, must be sought after in prayer.

2. *Vigilance:*

(a) This is necessary at every moment; we can never let up on it because the flesh is always ready to fight against the spirit;

(b) mortification is a part of this vigilance;

(c) so much so that he cannot be said to be vigilant who is not mortified.

(d) Pius XII (*Sacra Virginitas*) says that in this matter we can never take too much care, and no severity with ourselves could be excessive.

Modesty—the safeguard of chastity

This modesty warns us in good time of the danger; gives us warning of occasions of sin; avoids evil conversations and all over-familiarity with people of the opposite sex. It infuses into the soul a reverence and respect for the body as temple of the Holy Spirit. It is fed on the fear of God—filial fear, based on a profound humility which causes us to avoid all sin (Pius XII, *in loco*).

HL   THE   GOSPEL

A: Confidence in divine providence

Introduction

1. Christ speaks to us about the excessive anxiety for even necessary things—food and clothing.

2. He is not therefore talking here about what is superfluous or convenient—in which case his argument could be even more conclusive.

3. To prove his point he makes use of many beautiful and forceful arguments.

The soul is worth more than food and clothing

1. Is not life itself a greater gift than food, the body than clothing? (v. 25).

2. He who gives what is more important will also give that which is of lesser importance.

(a) God could never give life and a body to man and then leave him to poverty and misery;

(b) because his wisdom and his providence demand that he also gives us, together with these two important things, the means to sustain life;

(c) this is true not merely of the natural but also of the supernatural life. He gave us that life in baptism; he will give us all the help we need to sustain and increase it.

3. *Two lessons:*

(a) Confidence in the ordered providence of God, which will not fail us no matter what happens, especially when we are surrounded by tribulation and sorrow. God who sends or permits the cross will not leave us to carry it alone.

(b) Of the order we should observe in our cares and anxieties, that which is of most importance is the soul. Thus, when other interests have to be put on one side in order to care for the soul and its salvation, we must concentrate on that supreme good, leaving the rest to God.

(c) The same applies to temporal things.

Because God looks after other creatures who are worth  
far less than man

1. See how the birds of the air never sow, or reap, or gather grain into bams, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them.

2. *The lesson of Christ:*

(a) The wonder of divine providence which provides for every animal and insect its food ;

(b) more wonderful still is the care of God for man, a superior class of creature:

i. so superior that God has given him charge over all the others (Gen. i. 28);

ii. made in God's image in a special way.

(c) The image of the birds of the air is a happy one, because it reflects the liberty of action of true sons of God and also the souls of those who, free from things of earth, cast themselves on divine providence completely.

B: We should have confidence in divine providence

Why undue anxiety is useless

1. *Can any one of you, for all his anxiety, add a cubit's growth to his height?*

(a) The argument is a graphic one; not one inch can we add to our height or one moment to the length of life laid down for us by God's providence.

(b) Christ does not condemn our taking care of ourselves and our families; what he objects to is that excessive care which is out of all proportion to the value of these material things.

2. *The prosperity of the wicked:*

(a) It could be argued that wicked men apply themselves with zeal to temporal matters and prosper in them, gaining money and honours.

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(b) God has allowed this as a prelude to his just judgement of them and also as a punishment at times.

(c) No man is entirely evil—the worst of men have some good points. It is only right that they should receive some reward—not in the next life; so they receive it in the shape of material things, on which they have set their hearts.

(d) Ps. 72 describes the fate reserved for these in strong words which are worth our meditation.

### 3. *God gives the increase slowly:*

(a) He does it thus with the body; our bodily growth is so slow as to pass unobserved, but it continues all the time.

(b) He does the same with regard to our spiritual growth :

i. through an increase of grace for even' good action done in a state of grace ;

ii. the soul which humbly and sincerely dedicates itself to his service in the fulfilment of its daily duties is on the true road of sanctity; there is no need for extraordinary illuminations or inspirations from God, nor for special graces.

(c) The same is true of a community, when each one is consecrated to God and to what God demands, without excessive anxiety; all that is needed is a quiet observance of the state of life and duties assigned to each.

### 4. *Moderate care for the body:*

(a) What is condemned here is excessive care for the body, which is both useless and prejudicial, because it can lead to sin.

(b) This anxiety should be regulated by the spiritual element—the care of the soul, which is all-important.

(c) While the body is at the service of a soul in the state of grace it is an instrument for glory, that glory with which even the body itself will be invested in heaven.

## God's generosity with the flowers of the field

1. Christ uses the example of the lilies of the field—the flowers.

2. The force of the argument lies in the fact that God does not hesitate to use the most brilliant and beautiful colours with which to clothe a flower, whose life may be that of one day only.

(a) He will do more, then, in the case of man, a superior creature;

(b) God has also thought of the garment of grace for the soul; a garment which not only does not perish in a day but which can live for ever in heaven.

(c) With such care did he prepare this garment that, once torn by sin, he repaired it by the redemption.



Excessive anxiety, something proper to heathens

1. *Heathens live in a constant preoccupation with material things:*

- (a) for them there is no supernatural, nothing in the next life to which they can look forward;
- (b) therefore, logically, they look to this life and the good things it holds for them.

2. *The Christian excessively anxious about temporal things:*

He lives far from the faith, which tells him:

- (a) that he should cast all his cares on God (Ps. 54. 23);
- (b) that he should not be too worried, because he can always reach God by prayer (Phil. 4. 6);
- (c) that God, who fed the Israelites for forty years in the desert, never allowing them to go for one day without sufficient food, is still with us.

3. *A cause of scandal to those outside the fold:*

- (a) These can easily say that excessive anxiety about material things shows a lack of faith in Christians, who turn their backs on God and worry about material things.
- (b) The example of Esdras is eloquent (1 Esdras 8. 22).

Because God is our Father

1. He could so easily be a God who inspires fear—in all but a true Christian.

2. *The true Christian knows that:*

- (a) God is a loving and a provident Father;
- (b) each day he prays to that Father, asking him for his daily bread;
- (c) he is a Father who has given his own Son to death for our redemption—greater love no one could have. How could he refuse us much less important things (Rom. 8. 32) ?

C: Do not fret

Christ preaches detachment

1. *Today's Gospel is a fragment of the whole Sermon on the Mount:*

- (a) In that is contained the best treatise on religion and our duties as such, also the sublime beatitudes.
- (b) The Master speaks to us of charity, mercy, pardon, in the most sublime terms.

2. *He also preaches detachment:*

He could do it with complete authority who was born poor, lived poorly in Nazareth and then could say that the foxes had their holes

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and the birds had their nests, but he had no place where to lay his head (Matt. 8. 20).

#### God or creatures

##### 1. *The lesson is profound and necessary:*

A man cannot be the slave of two masters at once . . . you must sene God or money; you cannot sene both.

(a) By money we may understand all kinds of creatures; if we go deeper we may say, He who loves God serves him; he who loves creatures will be the servant of creatures. You cannot love God and creatures.

(b) There is only one road for us to travel: Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God, and his approval, and all these things shall be yours without the asking.

##### 2. *St Ignatius makes this the foundation of his Spiritual Exercises:*

(a) Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God and through this to save his soul ;

(b) all creatures on the face of the earth have been created for him and to help him in this task, so that he may reach his ultimate end;

(c) from which it follows that man must make use of them in so far as they help him to reach that end, and be detached from them if they distract him from it.

##### 3. *Therefore we may not love creatures for themselves:*

We must love God and only love creatures in so far as we find God in them.

#### Do not fret

1. The more we become detached from creatures the more we unite ourselves to God. The more we separate our attachment from them the more we occupy ourselves with the things of God.

2. St Thomas gives the reason when he says: The human heart attaches itself with greater intensity to one the more it separates itself from others. Therefore the soul of man is directed towards God more perfectly the more it can separate itself from affection for temporal things; wherefore St Augustine says that the thing which poisons charity is the hope of attaining to or holding on to temporal things, while the increase in charity implies a diminishing of the desire for temporal things. The perfection of charity is the total destruction of this desire (*Opusc. De Perfectione*).

#### The spirit and the letter of the Gospel

##### 1. *This passage is very difficult to understand:*

(a) Perhaps it would be better to say that is one which it is difficult to put into practice. Many will say that it must not be interpreted

literally; but perhaps, through an excessive prudence in our interpretation of it, we only go half-way along the road which God has planned for us.

(b) On the other hand, those saints who have been almost exaggerated in their interpretation of this passage have reached the heights of sanctity' through it.

(c) We have only to think of St Francis.

2. *A warning against over-anxiety:*

It is certain, however, that, in these words, Christ is not telling us to be idle; he is warning us not to be over-anxious—a thing which destroys our peace of mind and our real activity. However, it is no less certain that the greater our detachment from created things, the greater will be our advance in spiritual things.

Confidence in God

1. If temporal things are given up for God the result is a greater confidence in him. This is the foundation of peace and tranquillity of soul. For which reason we may well make our own the prayer of the Gradual of today's Mass: It is better to have confidence in God than in man and better to put our trust in the Lord than in princes.

2. To excite this confidence Christ presents God to us in today's Gospel as a Father. . . . You have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all.

(a) Consoling words, because he is the most powerful and the best of all Fathers;

(b) he cares for us with more love and efficiency than any earthly parent;

(c) the best way we can repay him is by this complete confidence in him, putting ourselves in his hands completely, as a child does, almost without having any will of our own.

St Teresa

She shows us how much we should appreciate God's care of us and how complete should be our abandonment to his providence (cf. texts quoted above).

D: Anxiety about temporal things

Introduction

i. Jesus speaks to us of the confidence we should have in God's providence.

(a) He does not say that we should not occupy ourselves with temporal things;



(b) he says that, due to the confidence we ought to have in divine providence, we should not be anxious about them or excessively worried about them.

2. There is a temporal activity which is good and one which is bad.

#### That care which is good

i. *That care about temporal matters is good:*

(a) when it is secondary, when man is ready to give it up to attend to divine things;

(b) when it is regulated, i.e. when temporal things are sought with a view to the eternal;

i. because these things are necessary to sustain natural life, which it is necessary and obligatory to look after;

ii. because such goods make it easier to live the spirit and practice of the faith with peace and quiet;

iii. when they are sought to attend to the needs of the family;

iv. or for a special good;

v. to employ them in works of mercy;

(c) when it is done calmly, without anxiety, resting all the time on divine providence.

2. *On obligatory care about temporal things:*

(a) to seek the necessities of life;

(b) to despise these and not to take care to provide them by all the means in our power, means which God had laid down for us to use, would be wrong. God intends man to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow.

(c) Christ, in the Our Father, orders us to ask for spiritual things, but he also commands us to beg for our daily bread;

(d) the apostle condemns such neglect—he who will not work should not eat (2 Thess. 3.10).

#### A care for such things which is evil

1. It is not merely sordid and servile avarice which the Lord condemns on this occasion. He also condemns over-anxiety for temporal things.

2. *This is evil:*

(a) when the temporal is put before the spiritual; this is a common fault among Christians, who fulfil their religious and spiritual duties so long as these do not interfere with their temporal affairs;

(b) when these things are sought against the real good of the soul or against the law of God. Then such action is not merely bad, it can easily be malicious;

(c) when illicit means are used to acquire such goods;



(d) when our attention to such things is accompanied by over-anxiety and fear; sure signs that we have an excessive desire for them and that we lack confidence in God.

(c) It is when things such as these are most necessary for us that we should have more confidence that divine providence will provide if we do our best.

3. *Signs which indicate excessive attention or anxiety about these things:*

(a) when our anxiety about material things is greater than our attention to the spiritual needs of the soul;

(b) when our attention to material things definitely impedes our approach to God or our attention to our religious duties;

(c) or when it impedes our giving ourselves to God with generosity; thus come distractions, temptations, etc.

### E: Seeking the kingdom of God

It has to be sought after

This aspect of the kingdom is stressed in today's Gospel. We shall see that it is a constant element in our Lord's teaching, because it is such an important thing in the spiritual life.

### The parables of the kingdom

There are two which deal most specifically with this idea of the diligent search which is necessary on our part.

1. *That of the woman who sought diligently the money she had lost* (Luke 15. 8 ff.).

This has a double spiritual application:

(a) the kingdom of God was lost by sin:

The light of Christ was lit on earth; he searches for the lost coin and finds it at the moment of the redemption.

(b) on our part through personal sin we lose grace:

We must light the lamp of our faith in the sacrament of penance and find that kingdom within us through grace. Grace will pardon us and sanctify us again.

2. *That of the hidden treasure* (Matt. 13. 44):

(a) The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, and man may find it in two ways;

(b) at times it comes spontaneously; in which case the man who finds it hides it, sells all he has and buys the field in which it is hidden;

(c) in other words, even though the kingdom may come to us out of the blue, as it were, we still have to work for it;

(d) on other occasions it will be the soul itself which seeks the kingdom with anxiety; it is uncertain of itself, seeking always something which it knows must exist; in which case the grace of God has been given to make the soul look for what it needs.

The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17. 21)

1. That was the reply given by Christ to those who asked him when they would see the triumph of the kingdom.
2. There are two interpretations of it:
  - (a) that the kingdom of God is within us;
  - (b) another that the kingdom was within them, among them, although they did not recognize it because they had a wrong idea of what that messianic kingdom was going to be.
3. In both cases the words indicate that the kingdom has to be sought; that it is hidden. Even though it may present itself in an exterior form, still we have to penetrate into it with the eyes of faith to know in what it consists and the good that it offers us.

If thou knewest what it is God gives . . . (John 4. 10)

In these words of Christ to the Samaritan woman we see the same idea stressed. Jesus -wants her to advance and to seek the kingdom with the same anxiety with which she seeks water at the well and from him.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst . . . (Matt. 5. 6)

1. This is the hunger and thirst which compel a man to search for the kingdom, just as natural hunger and thirst make a man seek food and drink.
2. Sanctity must be sought at every stage of the spiritual life:
  - (a) In sin, once remorse sets in, we must look for it by seeking the grace of God which will remedy our evil, through penance.
  - (b) The virtuous soul must seek to advance ever further along the road to sanctity; growth is a natural consequence of this hunger for greater sanctity;
  - (c) more so in the case of the soul who knows the small value of earthly things and detaches itself from them.

Let us seek the kingdom of God through the practice  
of the virtues

1. Faith must discover every day new' aspects in the mysteries of God, in themselves and in their relation to us.
2. Hope, essentially a virtue concerned with the future life, will not rest until it has found that life in heaven.

3. Charity, which grows every day, is the seed of the kingdom which must grow until it reaches its full glory in heaven, where we shall find the fullness of the kingdom.

## F: Providence

### The teachings of Scripture

1. God, who created the world, must also rule it; without that rule it would be nothing.

2. For this reason the Scriptures present God to us as ruler of the world and even of the actions of men—nothing can escape his hands.

(a) Cf. Ps. 32; Ps. 144, which is a hymn to divine providence.

(b) We are told that all things—goods, life, riches, poverty and death—all come to us from God (Ecclus. 11. 14 ff.).

(c) It describes to us numerous works directed by the Lord (cf. Wis., chaps. 6-8, in which there is a description of God's providence and care for Israel).

(d) The very death of the Son of God is attributed to God (Acts 2. 23).

### The end sought by providence

i. Man wishes very often to intervene and submit to his own judgement the actions of providence. For that, he ought to have the knowledge and the power of God.

(a) One philosopher is supposed to have said to his students: If I had God's power, how differently I would arrange things in this world. Then, after a moment's reflection he added: But if I had his wisdom also, I would leave things as they are.

(b) St Paul, talking about the mystery of the choice of the Jews and their subsequent rejection by God says: How deep is the mine of God's Wisdom, of his knowledge; how inscrutable are his judgments, how undiscoverable his ways! Who has ever understood the Lord's thoughts, or been his counsellor? Who was ever the first to give, and so earned his favours! All things find in him their origin, their impulse, the centre of their being; to him be glory throughout all ages, Amen (Rom. 11. 33 ff.).

(c) Who would have thought that the hardness of heart of the Jewish people would lead to the conversion of the whole Gentile world? (Rom. 11.11).

2. We must try to see always the end God has in view in all the workings of his providence.

(a) Men put their efforts to attaining worldly things very often; but all these things are temporal, passing; our true happiness can never lie in them. This life is only a preparation for another and therefore its value is relative.

(b) But no one is entirely evil; therefore God's providence may grant riches, honours and other things which are of the world to those who are destined for eternal damnation. That ought to show us how dangerous these things are.

### A practical example

#### *1. God's judgement and ours:*

Anyone who saw the rich man eating and drinking, while Lazarus the beggar was sitting at the gate, would probably have made a very different judgement of the situation from that *of God*.

#### *2. Yet the Lord was seeking the happiness of Lazarus:*

(a) Possibly he knew that Lazarus would save his soul in poverty, but that he would lose it if he were rich; at least he knew that his present misfortunes would bring him a great and an eternal happiness.

(b) *So God* chose the elements which would bring that about, even though men would not have understood them—at least, at the time.

### A higher purpose

We have considered one *of the purposes of divine providence*—the salvation *of mankind*. But there is another, and a **higher one**—that of his own *glory*.

#### *1. Not all men reach salvation:*

Some at least, if not many, are condemned. This does not mean to say that God's will and government have failed in their case. *He* has given to the higher creatures the faculty of knowledge and free will; they can choose; but whatever they do, God's will is always done.

#### *2. In the first place, from evil he draws good:*

Well known is the phrase that, if the fury' of the persecutors had not existed, neither would there have existed the patience of the martyrs. If the rich man had not been so cruel the reward given to Lazarus would have been less.

#### *3. Finally, [even the condemned give glory to God:]*

They did not wish to give due honour to his rewarding justice; they now give honour to that justice which punishes them. Always, good or bad, we give glory to God.

### The universal good

God takes into account the universal good of all, and that may sometimes mean that one has to suffer for the good of another. We



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cannot always appreciate this, because our view is so limited. We only see one very small piece of the whole picture. But God is the Supreme Being, providing for all and working out all things, great or small, for his own glory and honour.

### G: Providence

#### A false notion of God

1. Many ancient philosophers, great writers, like Voltaire, believed in God; but they relegated him to the shades of eternal existence, saying that he had no hand in the government of the world.

2. They tend to destroy the whole idea of providence, redemption, grace, the Church—leaving all things to man's free will. His fate is, according to them, in his own hands.

3. *This doctrine:*

(a) at first sight appears easy:

It explains many of the evils in the world, and is a comfortable thought;

(b) but in reality it is terrible:

i. because life without something to look forward to in the future would be impossible. If this is all we have in the way of happiness then it would be better not to live at all;

ii. when we see the evils of this world, especially the triumph of evil over good, injustice of all kinds, sufferings, etc., it would be a terrible thing, almost impossible to bear, unless we had the consolation at the same time that a wise providence governs all and knows how to draw good from evil.

#### The Catholic teaching on this matter

1. *The First Vatican Council is quite clear on this point:*

God guards and guides by his providence all that he has created, reaching to the very ends of the earth and directing all things gently but firmly. All things are naked and open to his eyes, including those which lie in the future and those which are the results of the free acts of his creatures.

2. *From this we can see that:*

(a) the foundation of providence is the fact of creation;

(b) God did not create the world blindly, but with infinite wisdom and knowledge of what he was doing—and therefore for his own ends. This end was first, his own glory—he cannot act for any other purpose than this, at least primarily—and then for the good of the whole world, the happiness of man in particular;

(c) if he **had** no purpose in creation then he is a fool, because only fools do things without thinking, i.e. without a purpose;

(d) and if, having a definite purpose in creation, he had left the world to its own fate, then he is defeating his own purpose. What is more, he is either careless or impotent;

(e) we also see the effects of providence; he directs and governs, conserving all things in being:

i. *conservation*: we have received our being from God, and if he withdrew his hand from us for one moment we would drop out of existence;

ii. *we are very like electric cables*: they transmit energy, but if the power station should fail, they carry' nothing, they are nothing but dead wires, serving no real purpose;

(f) we also see the manner in which he exercises **this** providence: gently' and easily:

i. *God attains his ends without violence or miracles in most cases*: he has at his disposal so many ways of attaining this that he does not have to make use of extraordinary means—unless "with a purpose;

ii. *he knows well how to attain those ends*: by making full use of the whole complex world of causes which surround (and confuse) us;

(g) we see its extent—all things which he has created. Nothing escapes his guiding hand:

i. *naturally there will be a difference between one kind of creature and another*: and this difference lies, in the first place, in the degree of love God has for one in comparison with another. The pilot of a plane takes care of his engines—and also of his children; but the latter is a special care, because it is that of a father.

ii. *He also uses some creatures—the higher ones—to direct and guide the lower*. This is not because he is incapable of doing it himself; but because of his love for those higher creatures—this has important applications, and not merely in connection with the R.S.P.C.A.!

3. *Therefore we find three great divisions in God's providence, according to his love*:

(a) there is a general providence by which he governs all things;

(b) a special one by which he rules his rational creatures;

(c) a very special providence which governs those who are really and truly just, in a state of grace and sons of God. With these he makes sure that all things work out for their good.

### Difficulty in comprehension

If there is any difficulty in understanding this doctrine *it is* usually due to the fact that we find it difficult to comprehend how God can direct our free acts of the will.

1. No one else could do this except God, who gives us all that we have, all our being, including the being of our free acts.
2. What is more important is the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, which is stressed so much in today's Gospel:
  - (a) This is a new and a startling aspect of God's providence towards men;
  - (b) all that we have said about the purposes of divine providence so far is, of course, strictly true; but it would also be true to say that we need look no further than divine love when it is a case of men;
  - (c) the loving providence of a Father for his children is the key to our confidence in God and the gratitude we should have for all his loving-kindness.

### H: Creatures

This scheme is based on a famous meditation of St Ignatius on "The Love of God" (*Spiritual Exercises*, 4th Week).

True love consists in fruits and effects, not in words: the effect of true love is the reciprocal communication of all good things between the persons who love each other; whence it follows that charity cannot exist without sacrifice. Do not, then, content yourself with tender and affectionate sentiments. For, says St Gregory, the proof of love is in the works: where love exists it works great things, but when it ceases to act it ceases to exist.

### First point

1. *Recall to yourself the benefits of God.*  
 These benefits are of three principal orders :
  - (a) the benefits of creation ;
  - (b) benefits of redemption;
  - (c) particular benefits.
2. *In each we find the three characteristics which denote divine love:*
  - (a) a love which acts and manifests itself by works:  
 What more active than the charity of God in the creation, preservation and redemption of man ?
  - (b) a love that gives, and lavishes its goods :  
 Has God anything of which he has not given a part to man ? Has he not given himself on the Cross as an example, and in the Eucharist, his body, his blood, his life, his divinity and all his being ?
  - (c) a love never satisfied with what it has given, and that would always give more:  
 Is not this the love of God towards us? Is it not true that his greatest gifts have not been able to exhaust the prodigality of his



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heart? Is it not true that there is in him a desire to do us good which will never be satisfied until he has given himself to us entirely and for ever in heaven ?

### Second point

1. *Consider that God, your benefactor, is present in all creatures and in yourself:*

If you look at every step of the visible creation, in all you will meet God.... And how is this great God in you ? In the most noble, the most excellent manner. He is in you as in his temple, as in a sanctuary' where he sees his own image, where he finds an intelligence capable of knowing and loving him. Thus your benefactor is always with you; he is more intimately united to you than your soul is to your body.

2. *You ought not to lose sight of him:*

Always keep yourself in his presence like a child in that of his father.

### Third point

1. *God acts continually in all his creatures:*

And for whom ? For you. Thus he lights you with the light of day; he nourishes you with the fruits of the earth; he serves you by each one of the creatures that you use; so that it is true to say that at every\* moment the wisdom and the power of God are at your service and are exercised in the world for your wants or pleasures.

2. *This should be the model for your conduct towards God . . .*

(a) Beware at stopping at a mere contemplation of God in yourself; add action—the faithful accomplishment of the divine will.

(b) The divine activity is combined with great tranquillity: to your action join contemplation.

### Fourth point

1. *Detachment from creatures:*

They have only limited perfections, while God has all perfection in an infinite degree.

2. *Detachment from ourselves:*

All our being and all our happiness depend, not on ourselves, but on God, as the light of the ray depends on the sun.

3. From this double detachment comes true liberty of spirit.

### Conclusion

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am, all that I have



thou hast given me, and I give it back again to thee, to be disposed of according to thy good pleasure. Give me only thy love and thy grace; with these I am rich enough.

### I: Good and bad use of wealth

A man cannot be the slave of two masters at once. . . . You must serve God or money; you cannot serve both (Matt. 6. 24).

1. Does this mean that riches are evil? That they are to be condemned?
2. The whole thing turns on a right understanding of Christ's thought on this subject and on the meaning of the word serve.

### Riches are dangerous

1. *There is no need to pile up texts of Scripture or of the Fathers:*

We need only remind ourselves of the words of Christ, when he said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom (Luke 18. 25).

2. *In what does this danger lie?*

(a) They open the way for all other things which the world thinks to be good—and that can be very dangerous.

(b) Again, once a man has started on the road to acquiring riches, there is no obstacle which can stand in his way and no means which he will not use:

- i. the minister of ambition is lies, says Tertullian;
- ii. no mercy for others, defrauding labourers of their just wage, anything for more profits;
- iii. lack of fidelity to promises or contracts;

(c) once attained, riches lead to other sins and make it easy to attain other pleasures:

- i. they can close the mouths of people who could testify against us;
- ii. separate us from the poor, who annoy us with their petitions;
- iii. constitute a constant source of temptation and sin;

(d) all this in such a gentle fashion that such things can become almost second nature to the rich man:

- i. it is difficult for him to admit to fraud in business—he considers that a mere commercial transaction;
- ii. he will not even admit his immoral conduct—it is the usual way of life in the class to which he belongs.

### Riches are not in themselves evil

- i. There have been many saints who were also rich: St Louis, king of France, David, king of Israel,

2. *Sacred Scripture praises the rich man who does good with his money (Eccles. 5. 12 if.).*

*To serve God alone*

*This is the solution as given us by Christ; Serve one master—not two. Our service should be given to God alone, because he is our last end.*

- (a) He who does so, uses all things created with joy and delight as gifts from God; he really enjoys them;*
- (b) but he delights in and uses them as God commands.*

*The advantage of riches*

*I. It may be easier to direct our poverty towards God, because:*

- (a) it is not attractive in itself—no one wants to be poor;*
- (b) less occasion of sin, and hope in God for a remedy.*

*2. But the rich man has many advantages:*

*He has more ways of serving God than the poor and he should make good use of them :*

- (a) his sacrifices, resisting temptations brought by riches, etc.;*
- (b) possibility of doing great things by good use of his money;*
- (c) the fact that he is an administrator of the goods which God has given him and the consequent reward which God will give to the faithful administrator;*
- (d) if a glass of water merits heaven, what will be the reward given to one who becomes a real benefactor to those around him ?*

*Service of God through riches*

*I. A simple matter:*

- (a) Once the passions have been subdued, the rich man can serve God without having to think of the other cares of this world—he has means and can supply all his needs;*
- (b) he can direct even his pleasures to God, because they are means of distributing his wealth provided they are not excessive or directed towards sinful pleasures;*
- (c) charity in all its forms is open to him—he can make due use of it through almsdeeds, etc.*

*2. Conclusion (Prov. 28. 6; Eccles. 7. 12-13):*

*Two sides to the picture, good or bad use of money and riches of all kinds.*

**J: Simplicity**

**If thy eye is clear . . . (Matt. 6. 22)**

**I. This is not included in today's Gospel, but is, in truth, an introduction to it:**

**It contains the whole doctrine of today's Gospel in a summary'.**

2. *We shall base our interpretation of it on the word 'clear':*

If your intention is right, simple, direct, then the whole of your body will be lit up by it, directed by it. You will see things as they are.

3. *This means giving a just and true value to things:*

All things, according to a divine, not a human, standard.

### The value of things

1. *The notion of value implies a relation:*

(a) Things have a value in so far as they are useful for something; there are two terms of relation—man, and the thing he uses.

(b) If the end for which the thing is used is relative, so will be its value. Something which is useful today may be useless tomorrow.

(c) If the end is fixed, immutable, then the value of the thing remains always the same. This is true in everything which is referred to God and used for God.

2. *Simple souls of clean heart and eye:*

This is a wisdom which God does not grant to the great and powerful, but to the humble.

### From creatures to God

1. *The intention:*

The man who has a pure intention, who is simple and direct in his approach, sees all things in relation to God and to men:

(a) He does not merely discover God's wisdom and knowledge, but also his Fatherhood, the mainspring of his providence;

(b) the simple soul, of pure intention, puts into practice today's Gospel entirely;

i. seeing that things are a means, not an end in themselves;

ii. that there is one who looks after all things with love—God;

iii. that he must look after man in a special way;

iv. that over-anxiety is not proper to the sons of God;

(c) that is why this verse is an introduction to the Gospel of today's Mass.

2. *The joy of the saints:*

(a) That is why the saints were so fond of nature; they see God in it all the time;

(b) nature spoke to Augustine: I am not your God, but he made me;

(c) creatures give the saints reason for singing God's praises and also lead them to him.

3. In this at least we can imitate them, surely!



## K: Consequences of the Fatherhood of God

### His providence

1. In today's Gospel our Lord tells us that there is such a thing as divine providence.
  - (a) Reason tells us the same thing;
  - (b) it means that God directs things to a certain end or purpose—as does every rational creature;
  - (c) there is a relation between things—one thing connected with another, and all directed to some end or purpose.
2. This had to exist first in God's mind; it is a kind of divine prudence.

### Providence is perfect

1. Because of its end or purpose—God.
2. Because of the means it uses—creatures, all of them and at every moment.
3. Because it covers all things, both necessary and free.
4. Because of the perfect way God uses secondary causes, one related to another, one helping and directing another, etc.
5. Because it does all things well, softly yet strongly.

### Providence and man

1. *It can be reduced to four words:*
  - (a) Father;
  - (b) wise,
  - (c) merciful,
  - (d) omnipotent.
2. *Fatherhood:*
  - (a) Human fatherhood is based on that of God, a human share in it and imperfect compared with it (Matt. 7. 11).
  - (b) No one should be called Father on earth, because the word is so fitting to God—we have only one Father, God (Matt. 23. 9).

### Various consequences

1. *No fretting—no over-anxiety:*
  - (a) This is the first result of the fatherhood of God, no over-anxiety'.
  - (b) There are two kinds of solicitude, good and bad; the good is linked with the virtue of prudence; the second is almost akin to avarice or greed.



(c) It is this second kind which is condemned in the Sermon on the Mount—it implies sadness, anxiety, affliction of spirit, bitterness, etc.

2. *Petition* :

(a) We should ask for what we need, of course, but without worry.

(b) The Gospel reminds us of these two truths:

i. that our heavenly Father knows all our needs even better than we know them ourselves;

ii. that we should seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be given to us without our asking.

(c) The model for our prayer of petition is the Our Father, in which we begin by giving praise and glory to God and then follow it up with our petitions.

3. *Do not fret*:

(a) This phrase, so often repeated in today's Gospel and in other parts of the Scriptures, is a direct consequence of the paternal providence of God ;

(b) all things are directed towards the good of man, if man is a good son of God;

(c) even evils, no matter of what kind, can be directed to this end (Rom. 8).

In spite of past offences

Are you worried about your past sins, thinking that they may impede the paternal providence of God in your case? Remember St Augustine's phrase: O God, creator of all things—except sin. O God orderer of all things—including sin !

How many benefits God drew' from the sin of David, from the denials of Peter.

Sons of God

Be a son of God and act like one; love your Father in heaven and go through life holding on to his hand. Put yourself under the shadow of his wings.

L: Tepidity

Its definition

i. *It is not* :

(a) lack of consolation or sweetness in the spiritual life:

Consolation is something which passes quickly and many pious people suffer from the lack of it;

(b) nor is it venial negligence in the things of the spiritual life:

When perfection is at stake many of us are inclined to be slightly negligent at times.

2. *It is affection for venial sin:*

(a) not so much tending into venial sin as doing so with ease and frequently;

(b) from habit and, above all, with affection for the sin;

(c) when this state of soul exists it is a sure sign that:

i. our will desires to serve two masters; it serves God because we do not sin mortally; it serves Satan in so far as it is not decided yet about giving God its entire affection;

ii. it is divided between God and the world, the devil and the flesh;

iii. what was formerly an occasional fall now becomes truly habitual.

3. *The signs of it:*

(a) Coldness in the performance of religious duties is not a sign of tepidity, but mainly a natural thing;

(b) nor is the abandonment of certain religious practices, if it is occasional, nor venial faults, if occasional and if we repent as soon as we advert to them. However, both can be warning bells;

(c) the habit of abandoning works of piety is a sure sign of tepidity.

### Kinds of tepidity

1. *One may become tepid:*

(a) giving up all idea of a higher state of life in the sense of perfection; this can be very dangerous, because it implies the bad use of graces already given;

(b) those who limit their activities to things that are of obligation and do not worry about perfection at all; less culpable, this, but still very dangerous.

2. *Once it exists it may present two characteristics:*

(a) extreme tepidity—near mortal sin;

(b) less grave, in those persons who try to live some kind of spiritual life;

(c) in this scheme we are concerned with the former.

### The extreme form

I. *Its characteristics:*

(a) With regard to mortal sin:

i. we must distinguish between attraction, affection and consent;

ii. we are not speaking here of consent, because that puts us into a state of mortal sin—not into that of tepidity;

iii. nor of attraction, because that is an effect of our natural inclination and of temptation;

iv. *affection*—this is a different matter; it consists in an imprudent attraction, conserved and favoured by our conscience. It has a natural aspect and also one which depends on our will.

v. *St Francis de Sales describes it thus*: Proposing to avoid sin and then feeling rather sad at being deprived of it; abstaining from sin like sick people who do not eat melons because the doctor has told them not to do so. They do not eat them, because the doctor has threatened them with death if they do; but they do not like it. They talk about them, try to get round the prohibition, ask if they may not at least smell them and think that those people are lucky who may eat them.

vi. *The grave danger* lies in the fact that affection for the evil and consent to it are difficult to distinguish. It is a permanent temptation, voluntarily maintained.

(b) With regard to venial sin:

No resistance to it or reaction to it.

(c) Spiritual activity:

None; no effort is made, no desire for the things of God, which would be a healthy sign had it existed.

## 2. *Causes*:

(a) life languishes when it has to exist in an atmosphere which is antagonistic to it or when it is not sufficiently nourished;

(b) the spiritual life needs strong food;

(c) just as natural life is a long struggle against death and illness, so too is the spiritual life;

(d) routine and boredom are the two enemies of the spiritual life, which can easily lead to tepidity;

(e) passions which absorb all our attention;

(f) conscience which can so easily pull cotton wool over our eyes by seeking vain excuses; bad thoughts and habits; little resistance to temptation;

(g) discouraged by falls and repeated temptations, no effort in our confessions, cold faith; criticism of priests, Church, etc.

## Remedies

### 1. *Hard work*:

Work hard against the two causes already mentioned; feed one's spiritual life and reform defects in it.

### 2. *Food*:

(a) prayer; lay down the necessary minimum:

Never pray without reminding ourselves that we have been admitted into an audience with God. Sincere prayer, in which we ask for all we need and in which we propose to reform our lives and look first to our eternal salvation.



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(b) devout attendance at Mass:

Not to confuse true devotion with a liturgical appeal to the senses.

(c) sacraments received with sincerity;

(d) daily examination of conscience.

3. *Reform:*

(a) Have no confidence in any type of piety which does not increase our spiritual life;

(b) it is necessary to meditate on the motives for departing from evil and doing good; move the intellect to think; move the will to act and to hate sin above all things; all this prayerfully and sincerely.

The great remedy

i. Recourse to the divine mercy.

2. Human misery is so important; more so the soul which is tepid. But all human misery has a remedy; employ our energies to the full and have confidence in the divine mercy.

3. This mercy, to be efficacious, must be tangible; it is, in its manifestations—the Sacred Heart and our Lady.

Devotion to these two sources of divine mercy—true devotion, that is—will be infallible.

M: Tepidity of the apparently pious

The fact

1. *Such people can be tepid, although they try to serve God:*

The reason; they are also trying to serve the world as well.

2. *Three kinds of persons reach this state of tepidity:*

(a) Those who, from a state of sin, have reached the state of grace, but are still tepid; they need to be encouraged to get out of that state.

(b) Those who descend to this state from a higher one. God grant they may stop there, although it is difficult.

(c) Those who are naturally good and have never been either better or worse than they are at the moment. They need to be shaken out of their inactivity. Often all that is needed is to show them the way.

Description

I. Exercises of piety which cost little or nothing; little prayer or examination of conscience. Routine confessions and Communions.

(a) Many resolutions, which usually die out or are mere wishes.

(b) a life which is led by emotions rather than by true intellect and will.



2. With regard to venial sin; they avoid most, but not all, by any means; their submission to God is not complete; they criticize, are worldly, etc.
3. They are alive—but only just; their efforts are easily frustrated, long periods of slipping back, etc.

### Causes

1. Always the same, but we may mention them again according to the two ages of life.
2. *In youth* :
  - (a) dissipation—life of the senses, the divine ideals never become realities;
  - (b) the imagination—especially in women, led by emotions, deceived about their degree of virtue, shocked when they fall, etc. ;
  - (c) activity which is ill-directed (perhaps there is even too much activity and not enough recollection). It is easier and more showy to act than to pray.
3. *In adult life* :
  - (a) too much activity—routine spiritual life, serious occupations which take up too much time, no time for prayer;
  - (b) ambition. Men especially may easily be led away from God by too much anxiety about advancement, honours, riches, position in life, etc.;
  - (c) scruples and a multitude of other circumstances in the spiritual life which can lead to over-anxiety;
  - (d) pride and lack of charity towards our neighbour.

### Remedies

1. *The same as in the previous scheme.*
2. *Activate the spiritual life and organization of it:*
  - (a) Mass, sacraments well received and with true fervour, meditation, spiritual reading, examen;
  - (b) remind ourselves that the spiritual life depends a great deal on actual graces;
  - (c) our co-operation is necessary—are we doing all we can ?
  - (d) organization of the spiritual life; in the sense that our works of piety must flow into our daily lives if they are to be of any use to us;
  - (e) have a fixed rule, not to depend on the caprice of each and every moment;
  - (f) spiritual direction very useful.

*Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

RAISING TO LIFE OF THE WIDOW'S  
SON

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Galatians 5. 25-6.10

Gospel: Luke 7. 11-16

(The other texts which may be useful to the preacher on this Sunday may be found elsewhere in this work, those concerning the resurrection on Easter Sunday, and those concerning death on the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost.)

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

1. *The Gospel and the Altar:*

The Mass of today is dominated by the Gospel in which the central figure is Christ, the resurrection and the life (John 11. 25), who now raises the widow's son. It is the same Christ who appears on our altars to give us life—to raise us up from the dead.

It is important to stress this connection between the Gospel and the altar, because it is all very well to think of the Gospel as history in which we are taught divine truths which unite us to God. But there is more to it than that; we must also love the Gospel by means of its mystical significance. When the Church chooses a passage of the Gospel to include in the Mass she does so with the idea that, not only will it reveal certain facts to us about our religion, but also so that, through the whole sacrifice, sacraments and prayers of the liturgy, we shall draw abundant fruit for our souls. We shall begin to live what we have heard.

2. *Christ, the resurrection and the life:*

Just as we saw ourselves in the man lying half-dead by the side of the road, having been attacked by robbers (twelfth Sunday after Pentecost), so now we see Christ as our resurrection—the one who gives us life; and ourselves as the dead boy who has need of Christ, as his life. From the point of view of the liturgy it would be only a partial application if we thought of this only in connection with those in mortal sin. He is also dead who is stationary in the spiritual life; he who bears no fruit, who is like the barren fig tree. Life is movement; he is dead therefore, who has it not. According to this

idea, we can consider as dead those who have no movement in the spiritual life, and we can think of Christ as the one who brings them to life. The Introit will give us a good prayer if we are in this state.

It is a sublime programme which St Paul draws up for the Christian who considers himself alive. To rise from our spiritual laziness and to fulfil the high programme *of* charity which the apostle lays before us, we can rely on the sacrifice of the Mass. Through it the Lord frees us from the designs of Satan (the Secret) and gives us life (the Communion), penetrates into the very depths of our souls and directs our activity by his grace (Postcommunion).

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Gal. 5. 25-6.10

#### i. *Texts:*

The section read today follows on after that of last Sunday and has a number of exhortations which are not really connected, except for the reference to the fight between the flesh and the spirit.

(a) Since we live by the Spirit, let the Spirit be our rule of life:

These verses which end chapter 5 have been included in today's Epistle as an introduction to chapter 6. In fact it is a repetition of the theme which occupies Paul's mind in the whole of this section of the Epistle. To possess the Spirit implies a way of life in accordance with that Spirit. It is not enough to be a Christian in theory, instead we must submit ourselves and all our occupations to the direction of the Spirit.

In this way we shall avoid pride and vainglory, as well as injuries to our weaker brethren. These in their turn must avoid envy of those who are apparently more gifted spiritually or materially.

(b) If a man is found guilty of some fault. . .

The fact that we are guided by the Spirit does not mean that we cannot be surprised by sin or that we will not come across unexpected falls; unexpected because we might not have thought the people who are concerned capable of committing them. All are subject to human frailty. In such cases those who have not fallen should do all they can to correct the sinner and enable him to recover his former state. This should also serve to make them watchful, lest they also should fall; at the same time this watchfulness will make them more charitable towards their weaker brethren. There should be no such thing as scandal—all should be charity.

(c) Bear the burden of one another's failings . . .

This refers mainly to temptations and sins, but it can also include other things. By helping one another we shall fulfil the law laid down by Christ, whose main commandment is that of charity.



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(d) The man who thinks he is of some worth . . .

The man who imagines himself to be so perfect or so important that he has no need to bother about the troubles of others is suffering from a great error. The truth is that we are nothing.

The treatise on grace is eminently practical, but we tend to study it in theory. This treatise, together with the knowledge that all we have and are we receive from God, is the very basis of mercy to others, not looking down on them in their falls and forcing ourselves to help them. We recognize, in their weakness, our own. We know that we, too, are nothing, and that the best way to continue to hold fast to what we have received from God is to attribute all to him and desire the same for others.

(e) Everyone should examine his own conduct . . .

The man who does this will be far from having any stupid ideas about his superiority over others who have strayed from the path of justice. He who really knows himself will certainly have something against himself—not against others. Instead of comparing himself with others, such a man will see himself as God sees him. Advance in grace is not a race against others, but a race towards an ideal.

(f) Each of us will then have his own load to carry . . .

This personal examination of conscience is necessary, because we all have to undergo temptations and trials; it will also enable us to be more prompt in helping others.

(g) Make no mistake about it; you cannot cheat God . . .

Verses 7-10 contain a general exhortation to the Christian life. Let no one deceive himself, thinking that the Christian obligation is a light one. No one can play the fool with God; a man will reap what he has sown. We must make our choice between the flesh or the spirit; if we have only sown works of the flesh in obedience to its desires, then we shall reap destruction; if we have sown works of the Spirit, the fruit of that will be eternal life. In our hands lies the decision as to what we shall sow—and reap.

He who sows can grow tired; but we should not allow that temptation to overcome us, because even the farmers overcome it by thinking of the fruits of their labours. The best seed we can sow is that of helping our neighbour, especially those who are nearest to us, our brethren in the faith.

### 2. Applications:

The greatest burden the Christian has to carry is that of temptation and sin. We can lighten this burden for our brethren in many ways. First of all we can avoid giving him scandal or an occasion of sin by our conversation, conduct and attitude towards things. We are our brother's keeper in so many ways. If our brother is not



*merely* a neighbour but in some special manner under our care, as a son, a workman, a disciple—then we have an even greater obligation. In this case our help should be not merely negative, but positive. By exhortation and example.

If we should find that our neighbour falls into sin then we should do all we can to bring him out of that state back to the grace of God. Above all, there should be no thought of our own superiority, no sarcasm—only friendship and help. We could so easily be in that state ourselves.

There are other temptations in which we can help our brethren; sufferings of all kinds, loss of material goods, a sad economical situation, etc. We can all help, if only by our sympathy, friendship—or at times with material help.

## B: The Gospel: Luke 7. 11-16

### I. *History:*

#### (a) Naim:

After the Sermon on the Mount, the cure of the leper and the Centurion's servant, we have this, the third and an astonishing miracle. Naim is about 30 kilometres from Capharnaum; a small village, with its walls and gates; some 200 inhabitants. It was at the moment when he was about to enter the gates of the city that our Lord came across the funeral procession, making its way to the cemetery, which by law had to be outside the walls, since it constituted a legal impurity.

#### (b) The miracle:

The description given us by St Luke could not be more graphic or detailed. The Gospel speaks for itself.

### 2. *Texts:*

#### (a) A dead man was being carried out to his burial. . .

According to the Jewish custom, the dead man was carried on a stretcher, wrapped in a shroud which left his face open to the air.

It is easy to come across death; we find it everywhere. Our very life itself is a slow procession towards the grave. We are born, and at once condemned to death; but we insist in hiding our heads in the sand and refuse to admit or to think about it. How people dislike sermons on death!

Yet it only frightens those who do not prepare themselves for it or think about it. We can only die once—and when a man has something to do which depends on one sole action he is accustomed to prepare himself well for that action. Only when it is a case of the greatest act of all, it would seem, do we tend to neglect this preparation. He who rehearses the moment of death is the one who is likely to die well.

On the other hand, death is uncertain. God, who has given us the years of our life to prepare for it, has also hidden from us the moment when it will come upon us. If it had not been so, then we would have heaped sin upon sin until the last moment. It is certain that God's mercy is infinite; but it is also true that it goes hand in hand with his justice. Let us remember the old saying: as a man lives, so shall he die. This is a law which, given the due exceptions—and they are few—is always fulfilled.

Death is the school for life. We live all too often seduced by the pleasures of this world, which will not last, until the danger of death removes the scales from our eyes and we see things as they really are. Reality, that which endures, is eternal life. The only real things of value are those which we can take with us on that last journey, not those which we must leave behind because there is no room for them.

Blessed indeed are those who, at the moment of death, find Christ by their side, as did the widow's son.

(b) Do not weep . . .

Here is the compassionate heart of Jesus. We may learn from it to have compassion on our brethren when they suffer. God and his Church also tell us not to weep when we suffer the loss of one dear to us, because life is not taken away from our beloved; there is a change in the state of life—nothing more. And that change is for the better, as we sing in the preface for the dead. Do not weep, because the journey has been easy- and the separation is for a short period of time. What is more, the change has been a happy one for the person who has had to undergo it.

(c) Young man . . .

Death strikes at all times and at all ages. We might think of the spiritual death of so many of our youths of today; but also of the material danger too; death can come upon them when they are least prepared for it. It is the age of great ideals, but also that *of the greatest* dangers. Good Christian education is the only answer to this problem.

(d) I say to thee, rise up . . .

The Lord has stilled tempests, torn the prey *of* sickness from its grasp, healed at a distance the servant *of the* Roman officer; but this time he reaches down to the very depths of Sheol to free from it one of its captives. It is as well to notice how, in contrast to others, the prophets, who raised people from the dead (e.g. Elias, 3 Kings 17. 22), Christ does so with authority, as one who is in full command.

(e) They were all overcome with awe . . .

Not so much fear as a deep and a lasting reverence which led them to praise God/They all admitted that a great prophet was

among them; they had not yet reached the knowledge that Christ was the Messiah.

It is as well to understand the difference between a prophet, the Messiah and the Son of God—three ideas which confused the Jewish mind. A prophet is one who speaks to the people in God's name. The Messiah would also be a prophet, but not merely that; he would be something more. Like Moses, he would be the founder of a new religion. However, it was not necessary that he should also be the Son of God. That would depend on God's will, and although the divine revelation is clear on the point, it is hard to see if the Jews really understood that, in this case, the Messiah was to be divine.

It would seem that they never did really understand it. Later we shall see how difficult they found the question Christ put to them about David and the Christ. If the Messiah is the son of David how is it that the latter calls him Lord? The High Priest did not condemn Christ because he called himself the Messiah, but because he claimed to be God.

### 3. *Applications:*

#### (a) Christ is life:

Material life of the body, whose resurrection he merited.

#### (b) That of the soul:

He was first of all victor over sin, and if we do not rise from sin we shall never see the true glorious resurrection of our bodies. A man in mortal sin may appear to live, but in reality he is a walking corpse. Bodily death separates us from this world; but spiritual death separates us from God and from his grace, the principle of the life of the soul.

Bodily death is frequently preceded by an illness of some kind, so is the death of the soul in sin. Unfortunately we do not notice that illness which slowly weakens us until it is too late; that tepidity and carelessness about our religious life. The body does not die all at once; only little by little, even though the separation of soul and body takes place in an instant. Nor does the soul usually die in a moment. The vitality of the life of grace is lost little by little.

It may be said of some of us, I know of all thy doings, how thou dost pass for a living man, and all the while art a corpse. Rouse thyself, and rally whatever else still lives, but lives at the point of death. There are tasks my God expects of thee and I find them unfulfilled (Apoc. 3. 1-2).

If we do not rouse ourselves, if we do not make use of the means given into our hands—the sacraments, prayer—death will come upon us without our taking any heed to the warnings, deaf to the tears and sobs of those who deplore the loss of a soul, surrounded by passions which are swift to carry us to the grave.



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(c) In the young man we see an image of humanity as a whole:

In each age there are different errors which lead men to spiritual death; but the truth is one and the same. I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14. 6).

(d) The widow can represent the Church, whose children die through sin and who weeps for them:

She longs to educate them, yet on so many occasions she sees them come to grief and die. But she is also a source of life, and it is a great joy to her when her sons return.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST CYPRIAN

(Some extracts from the Treatise *De Mortalitate*)

i. Although in very many of you, beloved brethren, there is a steadfast mind and a firm faith, and a devoted spirit that is not disturbed by the present epidemic, but which, like a strong and a stable rock, rather shatters the turbulent onslaughts and the raging waves of time, without being itself shattered, and is not overcome, but rather tried by these temptations; still, because I observe that there are some who, either through weakness, decay in their faith, or the attractions of this life, or through the weakness of their sex or—which is worse—through straying from the truth, are not so steadfast, therefore it seems good to me not to disguise the matter, but as far as in me lies, reprimand that feeble attitude of mind. He who has already begun to be a man of Christ must be found worthy of God and of Christ.

2.... For it is written that the just man lives by faith. If you are just and do live by faith, if you truly believe in Christ, why, since you are about to be with Christ and are sure of the Lord's promise, do you not embrace the fact that you are called to Christ and rejoice that you are free from the devil's clutches?... What else is there for us in this world than a constant battle against the devil, a struggle against his darts and weapons, a perpetual conflict? Our warfare is with avarice, with immodesty, with ambition and anger; diligently and with difficulty we war against carnal vices and the lures of the world. The mind of man, besieged at every point, scarcely manages to meet the attacks, with difficulty resists them. If avarice is prostrated, lust springs up; if lust is overcome, ambition takes its place. . . . Since then to see Christ is to rejoice and we cannot have true joy until we do see Christ, what blindness and folly is it which



makes us love the world's afflictions and punishments, and not rather hasten towards that joy which can never be taken from us?

3. The reason is that faith is lacking, because no one believes the things which God has promised though he is truth itself, whose word to those who believe is eternal and unchangeable. . . . God promises to you, on your departure from this world, immortality and eternity; and do you still doubt? This is not to know God at all; it is to offend Christ, the teacher, with the sin of unbelief. This is for one established in the Church not to have faith in the very house of faith.

How great is the advantage of leaving this world Christ himself, the teacher of our salvation, shows us. When the disciples were sad when he said that he was soon to leave them, he said to them, If you loved me you would surely rejoice that I am going to the Father; teaching thereby and showing us that, when those whom we love depart from this world, we should rejoice rather than grieve. Remembering this truth the blessed Apostle Paul lays it down in one of his Epistles: For me to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil. 1. 21). He counted it the greatest gain no longer to be held captive by the snares of this world, no longer to be liable to the sins and vices of the flesh, but be taken away from such troubles, freed from the fangs of the devil and called by Christ to the joy of eternal salvation.

. . . Many of our people die in this plague, that is, many of them are liberated from this world. This plague, just as it is deadly to Jews and Gentiles and enemies of Christ, so it is a departure to salvation for God's servants. The fact that, without any difference being made between one and the other, the just die as well as the unjust, is no reason for you to suppose that it is a common death for good and evil alike. The just are called to the place of refreshment, the unjust are snatched away to punishment; safety is more speedily given to the faithful, punishment to the unbeliever. We are thoughtless and ungrateful, dear brethren, for we do not acknowledge the benefits done to us.... By the dread of the plague the lukewarm are inflamed, the lazy are nerved up, the slothful stimulated, deserters compelled to return, heathens constrained to believe, while some of the congregation are called to their rest, a new and great army is gathered to the battle with a braver vigour, to fight without fear of death when the battle shall be joined, because it comes to the fight in time of plague.

Further, dear brethren, what a great thing it is, how pertinent and how necessary, that this pestilence and plague which seems so horrible and deadly, searches out the virtue of each one, and examines the minds of men to see whether they who are in health tend the sick; whether relations love their kindred; whether masters

pity their languishing servants; whether doctors do not forsake their patients; whether the fierce suppress their violence; whether the rapacious can quench the fierce fire of their raging avarice, when in the fear of death; whether the proud bend their neck; whether the rich even then give alms, when they see that they are to die without heirs. . . .

How often has it been revealed to me, how frequently and manifestly has it been commanded by God in his goodness, that I should diligently bear witness and publicly declare that our brethren who are free from this world by the Lord's summons are not to be lamented, since we know that they are not lost, but sent before. Departing from us, they precede us as travellers, as navigators are accustomed to do. They should be desired, but not bewailed; black garments should not be assumed here when they have already taken the white garment upon themselves there; neither should occasion be given to the Gentiles rightly to reprimand us that we mourn for those who, so we say, are alive with God, as if they were finished and lost to us for ever. Then we do not approve with the testimony of heart and breast, that faith which we express in our words. We are giving the lie to our hope and faith and what we say appears to be simulated, feigned, false. There is no advantage in setting forth virtue by words and then destroying the truth by our deeds.

Finally, the Apostle Paul reproaches, rebukes and blames those who sorrow thus over the death of their friends: Make no mistake, brethren, about those who have gone to their rest. You are not to lament over them, as the rest of the world does, with no hope to live by. We believe, after all, that Jesus underwent death and rose again; just so, when Jesus comes back, God will bring back those who have found rest through him (1 Thess. 4. 13). He says that those who have sorrow at the departure of their friends who have no hope. But we who live in hope, and who believe in God and trust that Christ suffered for us and rose again from the dead, abiding in Christ, and through him and in him rising again, why are we ourselves unwilling to depart from this life, or why do we bewail and grieve for our friends when they depart, as if they were lost? Does not Christ himself, our Lord and God, encourage us, saying: I am the resurrection and life; he who believes in me, though he is dead, will live on, and whosoever has life, and has faith in me, to all eternity cannot die (John 12. 25).

If we believe in Christ, let us have faith in his words and promises; and since we shall not die eternally, let us come with a glad security unto Christ, with whom we are both to conquer and reign for ever.

In dying we are passing over to immortality by death; nor can eternal life follow unless we first depart from this life. Death is not an ending, but a transit, and, this journey of time being over, a

passage to eternity. Who would not hasten to better things? Who would not crave to be changed and transformed into the likeness of Christ, to arrive more quickly at the dignity of heavenly glory, since Paul says: He will form this humbled body of ours anew, moulding it into the image of his glorified body, so effective is his power to make all things obey him (Phil. 3. 21). Christ the Lord also promises that we shall be with him and live with him in the eternal mansions and rejoice in the heavenly kingdom. He says, in his prayer to his Father, I will that where I am they also whom thou hast given me may be with me . . . (John 17. 24). He who is to attain to the throne of Christ, to the glory of the heavenly kingdom, ought not to mourn or lament, but rather, in accordance with the Lord's promise, in accordance with his faith in the truth, to rejoice in this his departure and translation. . . .

It is for him to wish to remain long in the world whom the world delights, whom this life, flattering and deceiving, invites by the enticements of earthly pleasures. Again, since the world hates the Christian, why do you love that which hates you? Why do you not rather follow Christ, who redeemed you and loves you? John in his Epistle exhorts us that we should not follow our carnal desires or love the world: Do not bestow your love on the world, and what the world has to offer; the lover of this world has no love of the Father in him. What does the world offer? Only gratification of corrupt nature, gratification of the eye, the empty pomp of living; these things take their being from the world, not from the Father. The world and its gratifications pass away; the man who does God's will outlives them for ever (1 John 2. 17). Rather, beloved brethren, with sound mind, firm faith and strong virtue, let us be prepared for the entire will of God. Laying aside the fear of death, let us think on the immortality which follows. By this let us show ourselves to be what we believe, that we do not grieve over the departure of those dear to us, and that, when the day of our summons shall arrive, we heed it without delay and without resistance to the Lord, when he himself calls us. . . .

We should often reflect that we have renounced the world, and in the meantime we are living here as guests and as strangers. Let us greet the day which assigns each of us to his own home, which snatches us hence, sets us free from the snares of the world and restores us to paradise and the kingdom. Who, set down in a foreign land, would not hasten to return to his own country? Who, hastening to return to his friends, would not desire a fair wind, so that he might all the sooner embrace those dear to him? We regard heaven as our country, the patriarchs as our parents. Why, then, do we not hasten and run, that we may the more quickly behold our country and greet our parents? There a great number of our dear ones await us, a crowd of brothers, parents, children, longing for us, already



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assured of their own safety and desirous of ours. What joy for them and us to attain to their presence. What a pleasure there is in the heavenly kingdom, without fear of death; how lofty and enduring that happiness, with an eternity of life before us !... To these let us hasten with eager desire; let us crave to be with them soon and thus quickly to come to Christ. May God behold this, our eager desire; may the Lord Christ look upon this purpose of our mind and faith, he who will give the larger share of the rewards of his glory to those whose desires in respect of himself were greater.

II. ST AMBROSE

Just as the Wisdom of God could not die, so he could not rise again who had not died. Therefore he took flesh, in which he could die, and by his death he attained resurrection for him who had died. Resurrection could not come to us except through a man, because just as sin and death entered through another man, so the resurrection must come from him. Man rose, therefore, because man was dead. Yes, man rose indeed, but it was God who raised him. We do not know Christ according to the flesh, but we do enjoy the benefits of the grace he won for us through that flesh, we know him as the first fruits of those who sleep and the first-born of the dead.

The first fruits are of the same kind as those which follow them; and they are offered to God as a gift. It is a sacred offering, made in the name of all, on behalf of a nature which is almost restored. Thus Christ is the first fruit of those who sleep; but of his own merely, of those who lie in death as in a sweet sleep, or of all the dead ? Just as all die, so all are brought back to life in Christ and just as Adam was the first fruit of death, so Christ is the first fruit of the resurrection.

Let no one despair or feel hurt at the fact that all rise again, since the just can expect the full fruits of virtue. All will rise again, but each one in his own place (i Thess. 4. 16). The results of divine mercy are the same for all, but the reward is different according to our merits.

Sec, then, what a grave sacrilege it is not to believe in the resurrection. If we do not rise again, then Christ has died in vain and has not risen himself. If he did not rise for our benefit he did not rise at all, because he had no need of it himself.

In his person the whole world rose again; the heavens and earth, and both earth and heaven will be free. He did not need to rise again, since he was not subject to the chains of death; for even though he died as man, he was free even in the depths of hell. Truly he was free who could bring about his own resurrection: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it. Truly he was free who went down into hell to free all the rest.



## III. ST AUGUSTINE

(Extracts from several works of St Augustine concerning life, death and resurrection.)

1. *Two kinds of dead persons:*

The mother who was a widow rejoices at the raising up of the young man, her son; the Church, our Mother, rejoices daily with those men whose souls are brought back to life. The former had died in the body, the latter in the spirit. Visible death is the object of mourning; the invisible death of the soul is neither seen nor bewailed. These dead are only sought out by him who knows them; and he alone knows them who can bring them to life again. If the Lord had not come to bring life to the dead the apostle would not have said: Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Eph. 5. 14). When he says: Awake thou that sleepest, you hear him speak of one who is asleep; but when he goes on to say: And arise from the dead, then it is clear that he is speaking of a dead man. Frequently, those who are dead are spoken of as being asleep. To him who can raise them all up again they are asleep. For you he is dead who does not move when you shake him, pinch him, wound him; but to Christ he was no more than asleep to whom he said: Arise, and he rose up at once. No one can awaken from sleep as quickly as Christ can raise from the dead.

2. *Three people raised from the dead by Christ:*

Let us see, then, what it is he 'wishes to teach us through these dead people he raised again to life. He raised the daughter of the leader of the synagogue, whose cure had been asked of him. . . . He raised this young man, the son of a widow. . . . He raised Lazarus from the tomb.

These three represent the three kinds of sinners whom the Lord raises daily. The daughter of the leader of the synagogue was still in the house and had not yet been carried out from her room. There she was raised up and given back to her parents. The second was not in the house, but had not yet reached the tomb; though taken from his room, he had not yet been handed over to the earth. . . . There was a third, whom he raised from the very tomb itself, Lazarus.

3. *Three kinds of sinners raised to life by the Lord:*

(a) Interior sinners:

There are people whose sin is yet in the heart and has not been brought out into action. One, for example, is seduced by some desire. The Lord says: He who casts his eyes on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt. 5. 28). So far the sin is not exterior, but the heart has given way to it. The dead is within, has not yet been brought out, and at

times, as we know from daily experience, men notice it when the Lord says: Arise. The harmful thought is condemned and the health of true justice is once more in the soul. The dead has come to life in his own house, the heart is alive again. The resurrection of a dead soul has been accomplished in the darkness of conscience, as it were inside the walls of a house.

(b) External sinners:

Another, after consenting, has reached the point of action, like bringing forth a dead man, so that what was hidden so secretly now appears in public. Are we to despair of those who have translated thoughts into acts? Was it not also said to the young man, Arise? Was he not also handed back to his mother? If he who has done evil is warned by the word of truth, is moved and arises at the word of Christ, he also receives the gift of life and can come forth, so as not to perish eternally.

(c) Sins of habit:

Those who, by dint of frequent sin, contract a habit which no longer allows them to avert to the evil they do, convert themselves into defenders of their own wickedness. If they are warned, they get angry, like the inhabitants of Sodom . . . they thought he was more worthy of condemnation who forbade what they did. They are bound by their habits in such a way that we may say they are like those who are buried. But what shall I say? They are buried as Lazarus was, of whom it was said that he had already begun to corrupt and stink. That tombstone is like the hard force *of* habit which presses on the soul and neither allows it to rise or even to breathe.

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4. *The grades of these sins:*

This force *of* habit of which I am speaking is reached in the soul through three grades. The first is a seduction of the heart; the second consent; the third action, and the last, habit. There are those who cast aside illicit thoughts so quickly that they take no delight in them. There are those who take *delight in them, but who do not* consent, in which case their death is not perfect, but it has begun. If consent is joined to delight then the condemnation is complete. After consent comes action, and actions are *converted into habits; then they* are in a desperate plight which merits the phrase: He has been buried for four days and smells. But then *the* Lord comes, *to* whom all is easy, although in this case he does show you that there appears to be some difficulty, because he groans in *spirit, to show you that* a great clamour is necessary to awaken those whose habits are set. . . .

He comes out alive from the tomb, but he cannot walk and the Lord has to tell the disciples to untie him and let him walk freely. He raised him from the dead, but they untied his bonds.



(a) Happiness not to be found in this life:

Why do we insist on looking for happiness in this life, where it is not to be found? I know that you desire it, when you are sick for instance, or when you suffer any of those tribulations which abound in this life, because when old age draws to its close, there is nothing but pain, without any joy. In the midst of all the sorrows of this life men seek nothing else but long life and happiness—things which cannot be attained here. Because no matter how long the life of a man may be, it is so short in comparison with the centuries that it is likened to a drop of water in the sea.

What is man's life, including that which we call long? We call long a life which is, in reality, short, brief and full of sorrows until it reaches a useless old age. Here everything is limited, short, yet why do men seek it so eagerly? What diligence, what efforts, what anxieties care and trouble in order to live longer and grow old! And what does it mean, this longer life, except to hasten towards the end? You had yesterday and you would like to have tomorrow; but, when both have passed, you have less than before. You want one day to dawn, and with it another—which you do not want to see—draws ever nearer. . . .

But, if men are so anxious to die a little later, why are they not equally anxious, at least, to live for ever? Yet no one wishes to think about it. Daily we see people searching in this world for happiness which they will never be able to find; yet no one wants to live in such a way that he may reach that place where this happiness can be found.

(b) We should look for it where it can be found:

If you were on the search for gold and I also wished to find it as well as you, and knew where it was to be found, somewhere on your land; if I saw you seeking hither and thither would I not say to you: What are you looking for? Gold. I also; but do not search for it where it is not. I will tell you where it is; I will not hide it from you. What is more; let us all listen to the one who can tell us where it is to be found. The same kind of thing is happening now. You want a happy life; and I cannot tell you not to desire it, only that you should not seek it in this world where it cannot be found. Is not our life very like death? The days rush by, today pushing aside yesterday, and tomorrow shouldering away today. They do not even last; and would you wish to remain with them? I do not rebuke you for your desire for happiness; on the contrary, I would inflame it even more. Seek life, yes; seek happiness—but only where it is to be found.

(c) Not in this life:

The man who hears my words . . . has passed over already from death to life (John 5. 24). When do we pass from death to life, so as not to be condemned? In this life we pass from death to life; this life



which is not yet yet life and therefore from it we can pass as from death. What is needed—the man who listens to my words, and puts his trust in him who sent me, enjoys eternal life (*ibid.*). Doing these things you believe and you pass. Is there anyone who passes from one to the other while remaining? Yes; the man who remains in the body but passes from one place to the other in his mind. Where does he go and from what? From death to life.

In this life, as I have already told you, life does not as yet exist, and we pass from this death to life so as to avoid the judgement. And why do I say that this is not yet life? If this life were really so, then Christ would not have said to one who questioned him: If you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments (Matt. 19. 17). Notice that he does not say: Into eternal life; he simply says: Life. Therefore this life does not even merit the use of the word life, because it is not the true life. What is the true life save that which is eternal? Listen to the apostle when he says to Timothy: Warn those who are rich in this present world not to think highly of themselves, not to repose their hopes in the riches that may fail us, but in the living God, who bestows on us so richly all that we enjoy. Let them do good, enrich their lives with charitable deeds, always ready to give and to share the common burden. And why does he suggest this? Listen to what follows: laying down a sure foundation for themselves in time to come, so as to have life, which is true life, within their grasp. If, then, you have to lay up some solid treasure with which to attain in the future the true life, that is a sure sign that the one you now enjoy is a false life. Do you wish to embark on the journey to the true life? Well, then, you must leave that which is false. Listen and believe, and so you will pass from death to life and you will not be condemned.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(Vainglory and fraternal correction—two separate ideas, but both suggested by today's Epistle. These extracts are taken from the *Summa* only.)

#### 1. *Vain glory*:

The word glory properly denotes that somebody's good is known and approved by many.... Now, it is not a sin to know and approve one's own good, for it is written (1 Cor. 2.12): Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God. Likewise it is not a sin to approve one's own good works, for it is written: Let your light

shine among men. Hence the desire for glory does not, of itself, denote a sin: but the desire for empty or vain glory denotes a sin; for it is sinful to desire anything vain, according to Ps. 4. 3. Why do you love vanity and seek after lying ?

Now, glory may be called vain in three ways. First, on the part of the thing for which one seeks glory, as when a man seeks glory 'for a thing which is unworthy of glory, for instance, when he seeks it for something frail and perishable; secondly, on the part of him from whom he seeks glory, for instance, a man whose judgement is uncertain; thirdly, on the part of the man himself who seeks glory, for that he does not refer the desire of his own glory to a due end, such as God's honour, or the spiritual welfare of his neighbour.

## 2. *Is it a mortal sin ?*

... as regards the love of God, it may be contrary to charity in two ways. In one way by reason of the matter about which one glories; for instance, when one glories in something false that is opposed to the reverence we owe to God.... Or again, when a man prefers to God the temporal good in which he glories. . . or again, when a man prefers the testimony of men to God's.

In another way vain glory may be contrary to charity, on the part of the one who glories, in that he refers his intentions to glory as his last end; so that he directs even virtuous acts thereto, and, in order to obtain it, forbears not from doing even that which is against God. In this way it is a mortal sin. . . .

It is stated to be a grievous sin, not only on account of its gravity, but also because it is a disposition to grave sins, insofar as a man is rendered prompt to be presumptuous and too self-confident; and so it gradually disposes him to lose his inward goods.

## 3. *Is a capital vice:*

Gregory reckons pride to be the queen of all vices, and vain glory', which is the offspring of pride, he reckons to be a capital vice, and not without reason. For pride, as we shall state, denotes inordinate desire of excellence. But whatever good one may desire, one desires a certain perfection and excellence therefrom; wherefore the end of every vice is directed to the end of pride.... Now among the goods that are the means whereby man acquires honour, glory seems to be the most conducive to that effect, in as much as it denotes the manifestation of a man's goodness. . . . Hence, on account of its close connection with excellence, which men desire above all, it follows that it is most desirable. And since many vices arise from the inordinate desire thereof, it follows that vain glory is a capital vice.

## 4. *The daughters of vain glory:*

The vices which, by their very nature, are such as to be directed to the end of a certain capital vice are called its daughters. Now the

*end of vain glory is the manifestation of one's own excellence... and to this end a man may tend in two ways. In one way directly, by boasting, in words, or if it be deeds, then if they be true it is called love of novelties which men are wont to wonder at most; but if they are false it is called hypocrisy. In another way a man strives to make known his excellence by showing that he is not inferior to another, and this in four ways. First as regards the intellect, and thus we have obstinacy, by which a man is too much attached to his own opinions, being unwilling to believe one who is better. Secondly as to the will, and then we have discord, whereby a man is unwilling to give up his own will and agree with others. Thirdly, as regards speech, and then we have contention, whereby a man quarrels noisily with another. Fourthly, as regards deeds, and this is disobedience, whereby a man refuses to carry out the will of his superiors (all from 2-2. q. 132, a. 1-5).*

5. *Fraternal correction:*

*Here it is as well to remind ourselves of the principles in which St Thomas bases his doctrine rather than on the words themselves; therefore we have collected his ideas:*

- (a) it is an act of charity (2-2 q. 33. a. 1);
- (b) it is a matter of precept, but that does not mean that in every case, at all places and times, we should correct our brother—life would become intolerable then;
- (c) when it is feared that the sinner will not heed the warning, but may even become worse, then it may be omitted without sin.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

#### On finding Jesus in our death

*Dying in Christ:*

(a) The death of the sinner:

The death of the sinner is an evil thing for many *reasons*: he must leave this world, where he has left his heart; he must leave the body, which is worse; but worst of all, there are the eternal torments which await him. They all worry him at the moment of death. The pains of his illness weigh on him, sorrows, fears in his inner conscience, the sadness of those he leaves behind, the thought of what will happen to him, of past sins, the account he now has to render, terror at the thought of the judgement, the tomb, the loss of all that he had esteemed so highly in this life—friends, family, possessions and even the very air and light that he enjoys in this life. Each of these things makes him suffer the more according as he has



had a greater affection for it, because, as St Augustine says; things which have been possessed with love cannot be lost without pain. For which reason a philosopher said that he fears death least who has least delight in this world.

(b) The evil conscience:

But the worst thing of all at that hour is the torment of an evil conscience, together with the thought and the fear of all that awaits it. Then a man awakens, at the thought of approaching death, he opens his eyes and sees things Avhich he has not even bothered to look at before. At that time all other thoughts are put aside, the necessary daily struggle for the needs of life can no longer be undertaken; ambition for honours and money ceases, there is no occupation to distract us. The only thought in the soul is of the account to be rendered; emptied of all things else, it feels only the weight of divine justice.

Think of the state of this miserable soul when it leaves the body; what anguish, what darkness will overcome it when it sees that the first thing to greet it is its own conscience, together with its many sins. There will now be no possibility of hiding anything or denying the charges; within us will arise both accuser and witness.

(c) The death of the just:

How far from these evils is the death of the just; for just as the evil man receives the punishment for his crimes, so the just man receives his reward: well it is, at his last hour, for the man who fears the Lord; his day of death shall be a day of blessing (Ecclus. 1. 13), that is, he shall be rewarded on that day. This is what St John expresses even more clearly when he says: I heard a voice, too, from heaven, Write thus: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yes, for ever henceforward, the Spirit says; they are to have rest from their labours; but the deeds they did in life go with them now (Apoc. 14. 13).

For this reason the just have no cause to fear death; rather they will accept it with praise of God, because they have finished their journey and their labours, while their happiness is about to begin. For which reason Augustine says: Of one who wishes to be free from these bonds and be with Christ we should not say that he dies with patience, but that he lives with patience and dies with joy. He does not fear death because he feared God, and anyone who fears such a great Lord has nothing else to fear. He does not fear death because he feared life; the fears of death are effects of a bad life. He does not fear death because he made use of this life in learning how to die well and preparing himself for it, and the man who is thus on the watch has no need to fear. He does not fear death because he did nothing else in this life except store up for himself treasures against that hour—virtues and good works. He does not fear death

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because he has the Great Judge on his side through the many services he has done him. He does not fear death, because for the just, death is but a sleep; it is not death, but the last day of work; he does not die, but instead he sets out on the road to life and to immortality.

### (d) His consolations:

He does not fear the other circumstances which surround death, because he knows that these are birth-pains of one who is being born to eternity, for the love of which he always desired death and suffered this life with patience. The memory of his sins does not frighten him, because he has Christ for his Redeemer, whom he has always sought to please; nor does he fear the rigours of divine justice, because he has Christ for his advocate. He does not fear the devils, because Christ is his leader; nor the tomb, because he knows that there the corporal body is buried to rise again a spiritual body

## II. MGR RONALD KNOX

### On Death

is from his meditation on “The Fear of Death”, *A People*, pp. 30 ff. Sheed and Ward, London, 1954.)

us, I think, the meditation on death is an effort; we teeth and go through with it. I suppose that, as we •om day to day, we are all the time unconsciously rhaps even consciously repressing) the unpalatable as you will sometimes find yourself ignoring the person you greatly dislike—some public man, for e writings or utterances annoy you, so that the mention jives you a sudden feeling of irritation, merely by l that there is such a person; so it is with this common race we call Death; unconsciously we try to cheat a belief that he is not there, although we know he is. know was asked by her mother what she would say if that he wanted her to be a martyr. And she replied nent’s hesitation, T should say, “What?” ’! How well at habit among children of saying ‘what?’ when they rfectly well what you said, and are only trying to stave m, get rid of it somehow. And so it is with many of us >ple; when God whispers in our ear the warning that taps soon, we must die, our instinct is to say ‘What?’ t he won’t raise the subject again. . . .

; trj- to console ourselves with the reflection that life gets ■e unpleasant as it goes on, and therefore when it comes won’t matter much. How dreadful, the gradual failure rs, the childish weakness of body, sometimes of mind!



How dreadful the long months of pain that may precede death, the drastic efforts of the doctors to prolong life, the vista of bottles over there in the corner! If death comes to us, quite soon, quite suddenly, at least it means we shall miss all that. If we live on, to go through all that, at least by the time we have gone through it we shall feel ready for death—we shall have got tired of waiting about in its ante-chamber. So we tell ourselves; but does it really help much? Rather, I think, the effect of brooding over those bottles is to magnify the stature of death in our own minds, make us shy at it still more. How formidable an enemy, which can thus cast its shadow before it! And can we really believe that death is only the gate to immortality when we see, or think of, a human body being taken to pieces bit by bit, first one faculty deserting it and then another? . . .

Is this all, then?—ought death to come into our prayers simply as one of those things which some of us are afraid of (like spiders), things which can be ‘offered up’? Are we never to pray about what our death is going to be like—apart, of course, from asking God to give us the grace of perseverance? I remember the late Archbishop Goodier, who gave me my ordination retreat, saying this: that it was a good thing to pray for the kind of death that appealed to you. It was surprising, he said, how often you found that particular prayer granted. I have wondered since whether Archbishop Goodier, who was an extremely holy man, prayed that he might have a sudden death, because he didn’t like the idea of the bottles. A priest went to call on him one day down at Teignmouth, and the Archbishop saw him off to the door. When he got a little way away he saw the door still standing open; so he went back and found the Archbishop just inside, dead. Another of these holy men, the late Abbot of Buckfast, had a great horror of deaths, and he, after spending a day or two in bed with a bit of a cold, told the infirmarian that he would be getting up next day, there was no excuse for treating himself as an invalid any longer; and he was found dead in the morning. . . .

Your whole life should be a sacrifice offered to God in union with our Lord’s sacrifice in the holy Mass. The crucial moment in the holy Mass is when the priest says, *Hoc est Corpus meum*. And in our sacrifice the crucial moment is that of death, when we too say, *Hoc est corpus meum*. This is my body, Lord, the body thou gavest me, and art now taking away from me, the body in which I have suffered, and sinned. Come, holy oils, and seal these gateways of sense, the points of contact in me between body and soul; seal them well, this is a secret present from me to my God. And if death is the moment of consecration, we, as we look forward to it now, are making our offertory; we are holding out our bodies on the paten, ready against the moment when they will be caught away from us in the consummation of the sacrifice.

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m. DAVID GREENSTOCK

The Glorious Adventure

(Some extracts from chap, io of the book under this title, 105 ft'.)

In a letter written about his father's death Pascal says: Let us not grieve like pagans who have no hope. We did not lose our father at the moment of his death; we lost him, as it were, at that moment when he entered the Church by baptism. From that day on he belonged to God; his life was vowed to God. All his actions were concerned wth this life only for the sake of God. At his death he separated himself completely from his sins, and now he is received by God and his sacrifice is accomplished and crowned. Thus he performed what he vowed. He has finished the work God assigned to him. He has achieved the only thing for which he was created.

This letter sums up admirably the Christian attitude towards death. It is the last stage of a journey; the culmination of a life dedicated to the service of God at the moment of baptism. The full perfection of the union with Christ which was begun in our souls by baptism and continued by the other sacraments has now been attained. It is important to see this purpose of the sacraments clearly if we are to understand and to accept death.

The redemptive power of Christ comes into contact with the soul through the sacraments and steadily transforms it into another Christ. Baptism gives us the life of Christ for the first time—we are bom again to a new dignity, that of sons of God with the right to call him Father.... Confirmation brings that new life to maturity.... If sins should enter into the realms of grace and tend to break the bond which unites us to Christ, his redemptive power is at hand once again in the sacrament of Penance. One really sincere confession with a deep sorrow arising from love can convert the sinner into a saint in a moment, so great is the power of Christ's redemption. . . .

When we consider the Holy Eucharist, we are at the very heart of this mystery of union with Christ. He gave us this great gift because, when people are in love, they tend naturally to live together. . . . Extreme Unction is, in some ways, the greatest demonstration of the divine love and mercy. As St Thomas says, a soul who has received this sacrament in the right dispositions should be perfectly prepared for entry into heaven. Sin has been removed from the soul, doubts and fears are wiped away. God now reigns supreme. Where before all might have been turmoil and worry', now there is perfect peace. The devil is chained so that he cannot harm the soul and his temptations only sene as instruments of merit. Holy Communion under the form of *Viaticum*—provision for the journey—strengthens the soul still further and makes its union with our Lord" more intimate. . . .

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At this moment there is one last act of our will which can and should complete the union between us and Christ; it is the willing acceptance of death in loving faith. This act of heroic virtue will purify us from the temporal punishment which may yet remain to be suffered for past sins. It is such an extreme act of faith, confidence in God's promises and love, that he, on his part, will respond to it with his usual generosity. We can give our souls into God's hands without fear of the future....

We are going home, where we really belong. There we shall find peace from all the trials and sufferings we have had to endure in this mortal life. Christ himself promised that he was only leaving this world in order to prepare a place for us in that other life where God himself shall be our prize and our consolation. . . .

There is no need for us to be afraid of death if we are prepared for it, because Christ has destroyed its power to harm us and our death has been, as it were, consecrated in his death on the cross. God sees in our death the image of the death of his Son, with whom we are one. It still comes as a consequence of sin, but now, after Christ's death and resurrection, it also serves as a channel of grace. For the Catholic who dies after a careful preparation it can truly be called a glorious adventure.

#### IV. BOSSUET

##### The shortness of life

(A fragment of a sermon, but one which is of great use in forming our ideas on this life.)

1. What a small thing is man, as indeed is everything that has an end. A time will come when this man, who appears to you to be so great, will not exist; a time when he will be like a child who is not yet born, in which he will be nothing. No matter how long he lives, even though it be a thousand years, the end must come. He does not differ from those things which do not exist except in the fact of the time he did live on this earth. . . . I came into this world under the law which proclaims that I must leave it; I come to play my part, to appear like others, but afterwards it is necessary to disappear. I see others leave this life before me, and there will exist those who see me leave it before them. These, too, will give up their place to those who follow them—and finally all of us will fall into nothing. . . . How small is the place I occupy in the volume of the years! I have only appeared to increase the number, but the play would have been put on equally well without me. . . .

2. I had a narrow escape from death, we say on certain occasions. That is not true; I escaped from this or that danger of death, but from death itself, never. Death lays many ambushes for us—if we



escape from one we fall into another, until at length we fall into his arms. It is like a tree in a high wind which is tearing off its leaves; some resist more than others, and if some of them manage to escape the storm, then winter comes and with the frost they fall. In a shipwreck there are some who are drowned at once, while others float for a time amidst the waves through the help of planks or some such thing. Then, just when they think they are safe, a wave dashes them upon a rock and breaks them into pieces....

3. Perhaps my life has lasted forty' years—and of those forty how many are worth the trouble? Sleep is so like death; childhood is the life of an animal. How much of my youth would I not give the whole world to rub out? And when I became an adult; are there not many years that I would long to strike out? What is left for me? The moments in which I had some joy, some pleasure? But how far apart are those moments in my' life! If I take out of my life the time spent in sleep, those illnesses, anxieties, moments of sadness, etc., how much is left for honours and pleasures? And even then, did I not enjoy these things in small doses, and not without anxiety? Of those innocent pleasures what remains to me now? A useless memory! And of those which were not so innocent? Remorse of conscience, a debt I owe to hell—or penance for them.

4. How true it is to say that we pass the time away! We do pass time, and it passes with us. The whole of my life could be reduced to a moment; and that moment is the only thing which separates me from nothingness.... What is even more terrible, everything passes before my eyes, but in the eyes of all, all remains. Things belong to God rather than to me and depend on him—not on time. Time can not snatch them from his dominion, because he is above time and all things belong to him and form part of his treasures. What I have done I shall find again, in eternity. All those pleasures which I have enjoyed may be reduced to one moment of time, but I shall have to answer for them as if they were permanent. It is not enough for me to say: They are in the past; I need not worry about them any more. If they are past for me, they are not past for God, who will demand an account of me for them.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### A 'memento'

#### Like the widow of Naim

I. Many Catholics have not learned to pray or do it in an artificial way. Yet the most simple act of religion is that of prayer. It is enough to go before God in humility and with confidence.



## SERMON SCHEMES

(a) Like a beggar before the Lord; a patient before his doctor; showing our gratitude, our joy, our tears and our petitions.

(b) The tears of the widow of Naim moved the Lord to mercy, and the miracle follows from his compassionate heart. The widow did not even say a word—or at least, the Gospel does not mention it; but she did manifest her sorrow.

2. Catholics assist at Mass; but it is sad to think that many come out of church without even having said a prayer; yet the Mass is the best of all prayers.

(a) Leaving aside the fact that the Mass is the best of all prayers, with an infinite value, there are many occasions for saying the most beautiful prayers during Mass.

(b) One of these is the *memento* of the dead and of the living. The prayer could not be more simple: Remember, O Lord, thy servants and handmaids who have gone before us in the sign of faith and who sleep the sleep of peace.

### Application of the Sacrifice

1. Among these fruits of the Mass there is one in which all the baptized share, by the fact of their membership of the Church—it is that which is called passive.

(a) There is another which is shared by those who assist at Mass according to the grade of their active participation ;

(b) another which is proper to the priest who celebrates ;

(c) another which depends on the application which the priest makes; this is given to him or to those to whom the priest desires to give it.

2. But apart from this, the holy Sacrifice admits many other intentions, covering a wide field of things, persons, places, business matters, etc., which can also have great power, because of its union with the Body and Blood of Christ.

(a) At this stage of the Mass the priest remembers all those for whom he especially wishes to pray;

(b) the faithful who assist actively at Mass should do the same;

(c) especially remembering those to whom they are joined by ties of blood, friendship, or other special relationship ;

(d) there is also the whole Mystical Body to be remembered—we are all one in Christ, especially at Mass.

### The diptychs

1. In the early Church these were read out at this moment.

2. In the East these referred especially to the dead, but there were also lists of persons prominent in public or Church life for whom special prayers were asked, at their head a list of the Bishops of the Imperial city.

3. In the Mass, especially in the Roman liturgy, the commemoration of the living predominated.

The dead were not mentioned originally, since this list was intimately connected with those who had made offerings for the Mass; it is presumed that not all the names were read out, but only a selection of them.

4. The Mozarabic rite does contain a mention of the dead, either because the living had made offerings for them or because they were remembered at this point with the others.

### Be mindful, O Lord . . .

1. These lists, called the diptychs, have long since disappeared; but we can still say the words Be, mindful, O Lord, with special intentions in our minds.

(a) At any moment of special difficulty, be it an examination, illness, loss, business problem, etc., the best method of reaching a satisfactory solution will always be the Mass.

(b) After the consecration our minds turn naturally to the dead and those in purgatory. St Monica said, when she was dying: Lay my body where you will; the only thing I ask of you is that you remember me before the altar of the Lord. This is the moment when we should remember all those near and dear to us—also our enemies, all the souls in purgatory<sup>7</sup>; those who have few to pray for them, etc.

2. Like the widow of Naim, we can go daily before the Lord and weep for our sorrows and difficulties, making known to him at the altar all our needs.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### A: Vanity

#### A universal evil

1. The counsel given by the apostle to the Galatians comes up against a contrary reality:

(a) He says: We must not indulge vain ambitions, envying one another and provoking one another to envy.

(b) He who so often preached charity now warns us against something which is so often the cause of discords; vanity.

2. Here we are faced with a universal fault; it is said to be proper to women, but that is not true. It springs from pride and is almost an attenuated form of that vice—and is just as widespread.

While normally not a mortal sin, it can be very dangerous because it usually leads to pride, the root of all sin and, as St Thomas says (cf. *supra*), it makes a man presumptuous and sure of himself; thus robs him little by little of his interior life.

The vain man or woman

1. *Not the same as the proud:*

- (a) The vain person is usually quite content to take pleasure in what he has or with what he thinks he has;
- (b) he considers it to be something great, so much so that he is not usually ambitious for more;
- (c) it is a benign form of pride, therefore;
- (d) he seeks vainglory.

2. *There are three types of this vainglory:*

As St Thomas says :

- (a) On the part of the thing in which one seeks glory, when a man seeks for it in something which is unworthy of it. This is the type of feminine vanity, which glories in clothes, the voice, physical beauty, etc. ;
- (b) On the part of the one from whom this glory is sought, e.g. a man of little or no judgement; this is the vanity of the politician, the orator, the wise man in the eyes of the world (scientists ?) who seek applause from the mass of the people, most of whom are not fit to judge what they are applauding;
- (c) on the part of the one who seeks the glory; if, for instance, he does not refer it all to God and to the salvation of his neighbour;
- (d) this is the most subtle of all forms of vanity, and it is that which we find in the man who takes exaggerated pleasure in his own good qualities, seeks that others should always admire them, etc.

St Francis' description

The humble Bishop of Geneva has left us a good description of these different kinds of vanity:

(a) He says:

We call that glory vain which we give to ourselves, either for that which is not in us, or for that which is in us, but is not ours, or for that which is in us and is ours, but does not deserve that we should glory in it. Nobility of race, the favour of the great, and popular esteem are things which are not in us, but either in our predecessors, or in the esteem of other men.

(b) There are some who become proud and haughty because they are on a good horse, because they have a plume in their hat, because they are richly attired ; but who does not see the folly of this ?...

(c) Others esteem and value themselves for their curled moustaches, for a well-trimmed beard, for crisped tresses, for soft hands, or because they can dance, sing or play; but are they not mean-spirited in wishing to enhance their value and increase their reputation by such frivolous and foolish things ?



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(d) Others wish to be honoured and respected by the world for a little knowledge as though everyone ought to be their pupils and look upon them as their masters....

(e) Others are vain of their beauty, and imagine that all the world pays homage to them. All this is extremely vain, foolish and frivolous.

(f) That which is truly good is known in the same way as the true balm; balm is tested by dropping it into water, for if it goes to the bottom and takes the lowest place it is judged to be the finest and most precious. Even so, to know whether a man be truly wise, learned, generous, noble, we must see if the good things in him tend to humility, modesty' and submission, for then they will be truly good; but if they float on the surface, and seek to appear, then the more conspicuous they are, the less will they be truly good.

### Against vanity—humility'

#### 1. *Good counsel of St Francis:*

(a) If we are punctilious in regard to rank, to precedence, to titles, we not only expose our qualities to question, to examination and to contradiction, but we make them mean and contemptible;

(b) for the honour which is beautiful when received as a gift, loses its beauty' when it is exacted, sought after and demanded.

#### 2. *According to this, the best remedy for vanity is humility:*

(a) Humility is not interested in the exaltation of its own person—what interests the humble person is good for its own sake;

(b) the humble person only wishes to give glory to God;

(c) he is not proud of his superiority' nor glories in it; he knows that all he has is received from God; wherefore, feeling himself a sinner and the most unworthy of men, even when he recognizes the good qualities which he really has, he says with the apostle that the only thing he wishes to glory in is the cross of Christ (Gal. 6. 14).

## B: Works done through vanity

### The malice of vanity

It is not usually a mortal sin, but very dangerous because it disposes us to other kinds of sins which can more easily be mortal. It makes a man presumptuous, self-confident beyond his real powers, etc.

### The works of vanity

#### 1. *What is the influence of vanity on our works?*

Here is a question which is of the greatest importance in the Christian life, especially in the ascetical life.

2. *In this matter we must distinguish various hypotheses:*

(a) Indifferent acts done through vanity:

i. the morality of such acts is entirely determined by the purpose for which they are performed; if such an act is done from the motive of vanity only, then it is bad.

ii. thus, to sing is an indifferent act; if it be done for the glory of God it is good ; if it be done from vanity it is bad.

(b) The same can be said of good works in themselves, but which are done only from the motive of vanity.

(c) Those good works which are done partly from the motive of vanity and partly from a good motive remain good and meritorious, but not so much so as if they had been done simply for the good motive, excluding the bad one.

(d) At times vanity accompanies the good act without being in any way a motive for it. This has to be kept in mind, because it is difficult to do something before men without feeling some vanity if we have done it well. This sentiment does not make the act bad at all. It is something purely natural.

### The daughters of vanity

1. Vanity is a capital vice, according to St Thomas, born of pride, the queen of the vices.

2. Among the daughters of vanity there are three which need concern us here:

(a) Boasting—talking always about oneself, one's works, but with the idea of obtaining praise for them ;

(b) it can take a collective form as well as an individual one—family vanity and boasting, for example ;

(c) it has indirect ways of approach—seeking praise even by mentioning one's own defects, etc.

3. Another is ostentation; seeking to attract attention in dress, adornment, mannerisms, etc.

4. Lastly hypocrisy—which seeks to put on the habits of virtues without there being any real lasting virtue present; at times to hide great sins, etc.

### Patience, prayer, and effort

i. *The soul must fight constantly against vanity in all its forms:*

(a) It is one of the more subtle defects and one which it is difficult to correct. We carry it so deeply rooted in our nature that even when we think that we have overcome all self-love, we still find the last vestiges of it in vanity.

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(b) Good souls are very troubled when they find that they cannot correct this fault very easily. Good men and saintly often feel small and petty when they observe that, even in their best actions, there is an admixture of vanity.

2. *As a remedy we may suggest:*

(a) Patience:

This is ven' necessary to withstand our own defects; we must recognize that it is necessary' to fight with all our powers, but we must also admit that it is a long and a difficult struggle, which will take, not months, but often years—perhaps the whole of our life. We must go on fighting.

(b) Prayer:

Ask for humility constantly.

(c) Effort:

The ascetical life is impossible without it; perfection may be God's work, but it also demands our co-operation. The grace will not be wanting but often our efforts are wanting. We have to make use of all means, mortification of our own tastes and pleasures; hide our triumphs, allow them to pass unheeded, etc.

3. *The result:*

It will be at least a lessening of our vanity', until at length it disappears altogether.

C: Teaching the ignorant

Two motives for the theme

*Both from today's Epistle:*

(a) Bear the burden of one another's failings; then you will be fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2).

(b) The second motive is found in the word *correcting'*, which could have the meaning of *instructing*; this would be the best method of preventing falls and also, once the fall has taken place, the best method of curing it.

Christ, the truth

1. *He proclaimed it many times in the public life:*

(a) I am the light of the world ;... he who follows me can never walk in darkness (John 8.12).

(b) I am the way; I am truth and life ... (John 14. 6).

2. *This truth of Christ was communicated to the Apostles:*

Not in any abstract fashion, but in a practical and efficacious way by the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost.



(a) Christ makes mention of it at the Last Supper: It will be for him, the truth-giving Spirit, when he comes, to guide you into all truth (John 16. 13).

(b) These words imply that the Spirit will give them a loving interior knowledge of the person and message of Christ, in all the details and aspects of his life and his preaching.

3. *The mission the Apostles receive:*

That of preaching, teaching (Matt. 28. 19-20); the world was far from the truth because it was far from Christ.

## The noble mission of teaching

1. The most excellent work of all is that of the contemplation of the truth, because it makes use of man's highest faculty, the intellect.

2. But even more excellent is the study of truth in order to communicate it to others:

(a) He who really teaches, communicates the truth; he is a co-operator with it. A high mission, therefore, because God is truth and to teach means to co-operate with God in the diffusion of truth, the expansion of his life and his teaching.

(b) Any kind of teaching is a noble thing, but the teaching of divine truth is the most noble of all. When teaching the ignorant is counted among the works of mercy it is this kind of instruction which is meant.

## The ignorant

I. *At all times teaching is noble:*

But if the one who receives it is ignorant then it becomes a spiritual work of mercy.

(a) Mercy is pity for the sufferings of others in such a way that we are moved to remedy them; it implies both compassion and help, without personal interest or advantage—just because our neighbour needs our help.

(b) A father does not exercise this work of mercy when he teaches his children, neither does a teacher, because both are doing what they should by obligation.

(c) On the other hand the priest, religious, or teacher who goes round the confines of the parish looking for the black sheep with a view to instructing such a one and bringing his soul back to God—all these are doing a work of mercy.

2. *This is a most excellent work of mercy:*

(a) because it is spiritual as opposed to corporal;

(b) because it is connected with the spread of truth—the most excellent of all the means to attain to the love of God.

### An excellent apostolate

i. *Of this there can be no doubt:*

(a) since the apostolate is nothing more than communicating the knowledge of Christ to those who did not know him, so that they may love and serve him;

(b) better—it is to make others into the image of Christ.

2. *Many do not live Christian lives, not through any malice, but through ignorance:*

(a) For this reason teaching the ignorant opens a wide field for all branches of Catholic Action.

(b) We should not forget this work of mercy, because although there are more schools than ever before, there is less religious teaching outside the Catholic schools—and remember, most of it is the teaching of error.

## III. THE GOSPEL

### A: Christianity: a religion of life

#### Introduction

I. In the scene of today's Gospel we see that the field of action is divided into two distinct camps :

(a) that of death:

i. a young man who has died; his mother, who can only weep, without being able to help ;

ii. the friends who carry the bier, without any other solution to the problem;

(b) that of life:

i. Christ, already communicating the life of his doctrine to his disciples and now ready to bring life into this scene of death ;

ii. the young man rises; the mother rejoices as do the friends.

2. A perfect image of what Christ came to bring to the world : Life for souls.

### Christ is the life

i. *I am the way; I am truth and life* (John 14. 6);

(a) Jesus is the life in himself:

Because he has the very life of God, the same nature as the Father and the Holy Spirit;

(b) he is our life:

i. the spiritual life of our souls;

ii. he has a body, but it is joined to the divinity in such a way that humanity is redeemed by it and from his humanity comes to the whole Church all the supernatural life it enjoys.

(c) not merely because he communicates life, but because he has come as our Head to unite us to himself, incorporating us into himself in the Mystical Body;

(d) this life develops with the co-operation of man with the vital principle of it, which is grace, until all our activity is influenced by it and infused with it; then the Christian can say with St Paul, I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2. 20).

## 2. *Christ preaches a kingdom of life:*

(a) All that he came to preach is summed up in this one phrase recorded by St John: Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17. 3);

(b) which means that, if Christ came into the world to give testimony to the truth (John 18. 37), then the truth which he preaches is that which gives eternal life.

(c) There is a phrase which teaches this quite clearly: I have come so that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly (John 10. 10).

## Life instead of death

1. In today's Gospel we see a young man who comes into contact with Christ just because he was dead; but for that fact he might never have had any contact with Jesus.

## 2. *The death of Christ, for our life:*

(a) In the spiritual order Christ draws near to us—but by dying for us.

(b) He is the grain of wheat, which dies in the furrow of the passion and which bears the wonderful fruit of all the grace 'which the world has known since the sin of Adam. He will be the Good Shepherd, who gives his life for his sheep (John 10. n).

(c) By that death he merits life for our souls.

(d) He also merits resurrection for the body—the whole of eternal life we owe to him.

## 3- *Our death, that Christ may live:*

(a) Just as Christ died that man may live, so it is necessary that man should die so that Christ may live.

(b) Paul expresses this many times, saying that it is necessary that the old man should die in us so that the new man may live.

(c) It is a great consolation to know that the words of Christ to the sisters of Lazarus are true: I am the resurrection and the life (John



## The sacraments of life

### 1. *Baptism:*

(a) sacrament of re-birth to a new life (John 3. 5).

(b) Paul sees in this sacrament an image of our burial together with Christ to rise to a new life in and with him (Col. 2. 12; Rom. 6.4).

### 2. *Confirmation:*

Grace to defend the new life.

### 3. *Penance:*

To restore that life should it be lost.

### 4. *The Eucharist:*

To increase it and be a pledge of our future resurrection (John 6. 54).

### 5. *Anointing of the Sick:*

Last element in the preparation for our entry into the real life of heaven.

### 6. *Orders:*

Ministers of the new life as instruments of Christ.

### 7. *Marriage:*

Consecration of the most vital function of human nature, the production of new life for God.

8. In a word, all the sacraments by which the reign of Christ is developed in our souls give or increase grace, that living water whose fruits are eternal life.

## B: Why death?

### A doubt about the Redeemer's victory

1. This doubt may arise because of the existence of death among us, even after the redeeming death of Christ.

2. In fact, death is a consequence of Adam's sin, through the loss by him of the gift of immortality.

(a) Christ redeemed us, and his grace is more abundant than that given to our first parents before the fall;

(b) yet this enemy still remains, an enemy so unpleasant and tremendous that we have to bury—often in haste—the bodies of those near and dear to us;

(c) but Christ has overcome death in a different way from his victory' over sin. Sin disappears completely in the presence of grace.

i. but death reigns in appearance only and with a completely different mission than before;

- ii. its mission is to hand over to God the souls of the just, that they may be glorified.
- 3. What is more, the very presence of death in the world produces salutary results, as we can see from those we are about to mention.

### To teach us to hate sin

- i. Sin has been the gate through which death came among us (Rom.
- 2. Since we cannot see the horror of sin, we can at least have some idea of it by a contemplation of its daughter—death.
  - (a) In Abel's body our first parents could see clearly the horror of their sin;
  - (b) in any dead body -we can see, not merely death as daughter of sin, but the eternal death of the soul which leaves this world deprived of the grace of God.

### As a lesson to the proud and the rich

#### 1. *First lesson: humility:*

- (a) By sin man revolts against his creator and wishes to become like God;
- (b) by the universal law of death God shows us all that we are mere creatures, formed from the dust of the earth and subjected to God's rule.

#### 2. *Second lesson: the vanity of all created things*

Especially the vanity of riches which have been of no use to one who is dead, unless he has been wise enough to send them to heaven before him in the hands of the poor.

### For the consolation of many

#### 1. *Those who live surrounded by sufferings and misery of all kinds:*

These, and many like Job, desire death to free them from their misery—to them it is a consolation to know that all this will end with death.

#### 2. *The poor—and in two ways:*

- (a) They see that riches do not free a man from death and that death is often more terrible for those who live preoccupied with the things of this world.
- (b) Death or its danger has often been the cause of alms on the part of the rich, which benefit the poor.

#### 3. *The just:*

Death is the end of their sufferings and labours and the entry into the joy of their eternal reward (Job 3).

### As a rein to check evil-doers

1. The fact of death, possibly a sudden death, can act as a salutary check on sinners, who would otherwise ignore other warnings of God.
2. Other evils, from which many sinners escape—such as wars, famine, etc—are not sufficient, but the fact of universal death is enough to make many think twice about the evil of their lives.

### The merit of the just

*For merit and virtue on the part of the just:*

- (a) Following the example of Christ, who could have arrived at the end of his mission of redemption without dying on the cross;
- (b) our death, in a state of grace, is somehow linked to his;
- (c) it is a supreme act of submission to the will of our Father in heaven.

### Conclusion

1. There is a pagan attitude towards death which can see no good in it—it is the end of all things.
2. St Francis called it sister death—a creature, something made to help us to attain our last end, our glory and that of God. For the just who die in the Lord it can be a glorious adventure.

### C: Consolation in death

#### The Christian's mourning

1. *Christ says to the widowed mother, Weep not:*

- (a) It is not a command, much less a condemnation of her tears.
- (b) These are words of consolation; they imply that she has found one who can give her consolation and can wipe away all her tears.

2. *Christ weeps for the death of Lazarus:*

He weeps so much so that this fact attracts the attention of those around him.

- (a) Weeping and mourning are natural when we have lost those dear to us;

- (b) more natural still if it is a case of our parents, especially if we have been ungrateful children, shortening their lives perhaps by our ingratitude.

3. *St Augustine, in his Confessions:*

After saying that he poured out abundant tears before the body of his mother, he goes on to say: Let him who wishes read this and interpret it as he pleases. If he should think that I have done ill, or even have sinned in shedding so many tears for my mother ... a



mother who for so many years had wept over me ... I beg of him not to laugh at my tears; rather, if he be sufficiently charitable, let him weep too, for my sins.

### Tears of hope

1. We must allow nature to weep tears which alleviate grief; but we must not grieve like those who have no hope (i Thess. 4. 12).

2. *There are many motives for this hope:*

(a) the knowledge that even death comes to us from God. It is our Father who has made this universal law (Heb. 9. 27);

(b) death is but a sleep (cf. John 11 ; Acts 7. 59);

(c) with this sleep there has come to the soul the true joy of heaven.

i. if not immediately—because the soul may need our help in purgatory—at least the certainty of heaven, because sin is no longer possible for it;

ii. this is the gain which Paul saw in death (Phil. 1. 21).

(d) We shall one day go to them and rejoin them; they have merely gone before us—a few short hours or years and it will be as it was before, only more so. Our love will be re-united.

### Consolation for what has been left behind

1. *He who dies leaves his body:*

(a) St Paul calls us all tent-dwellers (2 Cor. 5. 4), with reason:

i. the union of soul and body on earth is of short duration;

ii. home is a place of rest, something stable; the tent is something which we use for a while only; then we leave it to go home;

iii. the idea means that we are like strangers in a strange land;

iv. soldiers use them in war—we are soldiers of Christ, who have to maintain a constant battle against our enemies.

(b) All this consoles us in the presence of the dead body, because we know that this person has left things which pass in order to acquire what is sure and permanent.

2. *The dead say goodbye to the world:*

(a) and with it they leave behind all their anxieties and dangers;

(b) no longer is the life of grace in danger; here in the world there is always the danger of sin and the loss of grace—and eternal life with it.

3. *He leaves the world's goods:*

(a) all of them chains which prevent the kingdom of God from growing in us;

(b) there is no longer a double anxiety, for material and spiritual things; all now belongs to God.

4. *He leaves the miseries of this life:*

Free from work, danger of sin, all danger.

### Consolation for the memory of them

The just leave behind them this consolation, summed up in an inscription over the tomb of Cardinal Alciati in the Church of St Mary of the Angels in Rome: He lived in virtue, he lives in the memory of men on the earth; he will live in glory for eternity.

### D : Moral death of youth

#### The scene of the Gospel

1. Christ—source of life through his teaching, his example, his grace and sacraments.
2. A young man, dead, carried out to burial, in the opposite direction to the way Christ is going.
3. A mother who accompanies him, weeping because the last efforts to save the life of her son have failed.

### Christ continues to pass by

He passes in the priests, the tabernacle, the example of so many of our youth, who are exemplary.

### Our mother, too, continues to weep

1. Perhaps our earthly mother, who weeps for a son or daughter spiritually dead; she may have done all she could to prevent this; or she may have been too weak, lacking in a spirit of education, careless about her children's friends, etc.
2. It may be the Church who weeps, for those youths for whom she has done so much and yet they have ignored her.

### A dead youth

*This is a young man:*

(a) Christ uses the example of a young man when he is talking about the moral death of a soul—the prodigal son ;

(b) this age, when it is said that we live life, is just the age of most danger ;

(c) from passions, from bad example, literature, etc.

(d) one of the causes of the moral death of youth is lack of confidence :

- i. in their family, parents, etc.
- ii. in society;
- iii. in the world.

(c) The young man was being carried—so often this happens; youth is led astray by those who seem to be friends or by natural instincts which have never been controlled.

### Conclusion

1. Beg from God an efficacious meeting between Christ and the soul of our Catholic youth.
2. Mothers can do so much by their prayer and example.
3. Let friends be a help, not a cause of scandal.

### E: Rising again to the life of grace

#### Confession

1. In Naim we see a man who, at the command of Christ, comes back to normal life.
  - (a) We wish to fix our attention on another moment, all too frequent in our lives, in which Christ meets souls in sin, dead to grace, and restores them to their supernatural life again.
  - (b) This happens in confession.
2. There are two moments, two actions so to speak, in confession; the forgiving of sin and the restoration to the life of grace.
  - (a) Most of us think only of the first; or at least we think more about it than we do about the second ;
  - (b) we shall concentrate most of all on this second element.
3. In Naim the Lord limits his activity to something we might call external; at his command a soul is reunited with a body. In this new encounter in confession the influence of Christ is more intimate, because we receive new life insofar as we are united with him.

#### Pardon and sin

1. *The state of a soul dead in the sight of the Lord:*
  - (a) the deformity which is sin; guilt and punishment;
  - (b) deprived of life; subject to the devil.
2. *Jesus begins his work.*
3. *The pardon of sin:*
  - (a) in the sacrament of penance he joins us to himself;
  - (b) all the sacraments have this effect, but each one in a different way;
  - (c) in this sacrament we receive the effects of Christ's death and passion :
    - i. Christ dies because of sin; in confession we die to sin, which is destroyed ;

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ii. this death to sin is brought about because, at this moment, we are united to Christ and receive the influence of his merits and satisfactions.

(d) Not merely that, our union with Christ through confession gives to our new life a satisfactory value—enables it to satisfy God for the sins we have committed and which have now been pardoned.

In this sacrament all our actions have been given value to satisfy divine justice, outraged by sin.

(e) Meditation on this should help us to remember our new condition as victims for sin and so avoid routine—that great enemy of the spiritual life.

### It increases grace

1. *Death to sin means an increase:*

The seed, which must die before it can bring forth fruit.

2. *This life is received when sin is forgiven:*

(a) pardon of sin is effected by the infusion of grace; the act is one, but it can be considered from two points of view, the negative and the positive;

(b) the more important is the positive, consisting in union with Christ, the true Vine, without which union there can be no life;

(c) from this union come our merits and our supernatural acts—acts of Christ in us.

3- *Christ has the fullness of life:*

But we have not—we have to grow until the day of our death.

4. *But by which acts does this life grow?*

(a) Through all those which are supernatural; through the exercise of any virtue.

(b) However, in confession there is a special kind of act through which grace can be especially increased:

i. think once more of confession as intimately linked with the death of Christ; everything done then was by way of suffering; in confession those acts are lifted up to a special level to increase grace and merit which are connected either with the struggle to do good or avoid evil. Part of the absolution prayer refers to these. Whatever good you have done, or evil you have suffered. ...

ii. what was first of all expiatory now becomes meritorious for an increase of grace.

(c) I may find it hard to look back on my baptism, so many years have passed; but it should not be so difficult for me to look back on my last confession, especially in moments of sadness or torment

## Eternal life

### 1. *The perfect life:*

(a) The perfect is the end of imperfection—the whole of the supernatural life is directed towards this perfection.

(b) Christ meets us in the Naim of confession; he sows the seed of life, the harvest will be in heaven when we shall live with him and be like him.

### 2. *Confession changes all our sorrows into the seed of eternal life:*

Not one of them can be compared to the glory to come.

## Let us return to Naim

1. We need not envy this youth; he left death behind him; we have left sin behind us.

2. You live again the life which this mother gave you—I have exchanged hell for the life of God in the sight of Mary, my mother, who weeps for joy. You will die again—by his grace I will not.

## F: Death—the end of a journey

### This life is a journey

Like all travel it must have :

(a) an end or purpose—few people, if any, travel because they like it;

(b) we must know where we are going—otherwise we will not even begin the journey ;

(c) we must know something of the means to reach our goal.

## The end or purpose of life

### 1. *Not this world:*

It is transitory, we have here no abiding city—we are truly on a journey, whether we like it or not.

### 2. *The end is heaven—or hell, for all of us:*

Like all travellers, we shall have companions, but they too are transitory—some get out at a station half-way along the route, others get in; it would be stupid to regard any of them as our last end or purpose in making the journey, or to become so interested in them that we did not change trains when necessary, for example.

3. In all great enterprises it is essential to keep the end or purpose in view all the time, otherwise we are liable to be distracted from it. The same is true here; think of your last end, not as something sad, but as a return home, where you really belong and are among your true friends.

### The way we are to travel

*Here we have guides, we are not left on our own:*

- (a) Christ himself our model—the way, truth and life ;
- (b) the Church, infallible guide appointed by Christ;
- (c) the priests and bishops; all will help us to keep on the right path if we allow them to do so ;
- (d) it would be stupid indeed to ignore such guidance and to rely on our own efforts to find the way; we are in unknown territory—unknown to us, at least. They know it well.

### The means

1. The commandments, our compass and map.
2. The sacraments, our food and provision for the journey.
3. Grace—our strength to undertake it with all its difficulties and hardships.

### Death, the gate into life

1. At the end of an earthly journey we leave the train and our companions, knowing full well that it is necessary' in order to reach home.
2. We do so willingly, however pleasant they have made the journey for us, because otherwise we shall never reach our home and family.
3. When we reach home all the hardships are forgotten in the joy' we have at being among our own.

### Life is like that

1. We are slowly but surely travelling towards our eternal destiny. The journey will have an end, even though we may not like to think about it now.
2. When we arrive, we shall have to leave all things which have been a part of the journey in order to reach home. Then so many of those things will take on a new importance in our minds, either because they have kept us away from home for a long time or else because they have helped us.
3. The Church can tell us which things will help us to reach home and which will not.

### Luggage

- I. The trick of travel is not to take more than is essential—all great expeditions make a special study of this, and the nearer they come to reaching the goal the more important it becomes to study this



factor in detail—extra weight can mean death in some cases (Everest).

2. To reach the goal some things have to be abandoned—others are essential.

3. We are in the same position with regard to our journey to heaven. Study the position carefully; cast aside anything that may not be necessary or useful; even die, consider carefully the list you have made—are they all useful or necessary ?

### Death—not an end but a beginning

1. Our faith teaches us this quite clearly; but we are not prepared to take it on faith—we must, if we are to reach the end safely.

2. When we pass from this world to the next, we really do pass from death to life.

3. Try to think about it now, before it happens. Never mind the details of death, they are not so important. The important thing is to be prepared for that change of trains now—and to remain in that state. Then we are certain of attaining the goal—eternal life.

## G: The miracle of the resurrection of a soul

### A daily miracle

1. The people were astonished at the raising of the young man to life—but every day the world (although it does not know it) witnesses a similar miracle in the restoration of so many souls to the life of grace.

(a) This took place at my baptism, when God changed an enemy into a friend; when I was dead and came to life as a son of God.

(b) It takes place in the confessional;

(c) every time the sinner begins to love God.

2. However, with this re-birth of souls the same thing happens, according to St Augustine, as with the works of creation—we do not appreciate them because they happen so frequently. We do not appreciate the difference between a soul in sin and the soul in a state of grace.

3. Let us see, with St Thomas, what this means.

### A miracle of love

It may not be a miracle in the strict sense of the word; but in the wide sense it certainly is. Is it not a miracle that someone should pardon his enemies and make them his sons ? Is it not a miracle that God should wait for us, day after day, expecting our co-operation with him?

### Something only God can do

#### 1. *This is a work which is entirely divine:*

(a) Only God can make a man just and create the grace which performs that task. All acts of creation are magnificent; but this one more so, because it is supernatural and brings the life of God to the soul.

(b) Only God can pardon sin, which is an offence against him;

(c) only God can give us the adoption of sons;

(d) only he can give us the right to heaven—which is his life and his home.

#### 2. *It is the greatest of all his works:*

(a) Any work is measured by its effects; this one gives us divine life and the right to heaven.

(b) Earth and all things on it will pass; but this life is for eternity, if we co-operate with it.

### Once again in Naim

1. If we look back at Naim once again, can we compare that miracle with the act by which God justifies the sinner—we do not call the latter a miracle only because God repeats it so many times.

(a) There was a dead body—here a dead soul;

(b) there a short human life which is given back, only to be lost again one day in death; here is an immortal life;

(c) there life was restored, the union of soul and body—both soul and body desired that reunion, longed for it; here is a soul which, because of the sin which is on it, is opposed to the grace which is restored to it;

(d) there the body did not oppose the reunion—here God often has to use great power to bring the sinner to repent;

(e) there it was an unknown young man; here an enemy.

2. May God grant that we may always appreciate the grace which he has given us. He promised his disciples that they would do even greater things than he did; may I be allowed to associate myself with this, the greatest work of all, the conversion of sinners!

### H: The characters in this miracle

#### Jesus Christ

##### 1. *He stands out as the main figure:*

Of course, and what does he do?

(a) He has preached the Sermon on the Mount, healed the servant of the centurion and a leper. Preaching and doing good—those are his missions.

(b) Do we take heed of his preaching; appreciate his gifts of grace? Many heard him, and many did not know how to ask for what they really needed—salvation. Do we hear and ask as we should?

2. *His mercy:*

(a) On seeing the funeral procession he is moved with pity; he took all burdens upon himself.

(b) We, on the contrary, while very conscious of our own miseries, are often unsympathetic with those of others.

(c) Christ's mercy was ever active and effective; to deplore the sad state of the poor and do nothing effective to help is not to have the pity of Jesus.

3. *Omnipotence:*

(a) He commands the winds and seas and they obey him; he gives orders to death itself and makes it give up its prey; small wonder that the people acclaim him as a great prophet.

(b) But it is a power which is used to do good. The more powerful you are the more reason why you should use your power for the benefit of others; thus you will be more like him in life, and death will bring your reward.

## The crowd

*They surround Jesus as usual but not all are his disciples:*

Are we his disciples, truly? A disciple is one who hears his doctrine and obeys his commands. We might examine our consciences.

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## The widow

1. *She represents the greatest of all sorrows:*

Having already had to weep for her husband, she now has to weep again for her only son.

The world is a sad place, even though it tries to hide the fact; the cross follows us wherever we go.

2. *She found Jesus Christ—the only remedy for sadness:*

The only effective consolation at such times lies in Christ, his teaching and his person. We have him with us in the Blessed Sacrament, just as she had him in her grief.

## The young man

1. *We often see a funeral passing through our streets:*

(a) Death is a preacher who stands in his pulpit when we least expect it, but few care to listen to his sermon.

(b) But not to think about problems really does not help to solve them; on the contrary, those problems which are acute really become worse if we let them go for too long without trying to solve them.



2. *Death teaches us many lessons:*

(a) A punishment for sin; see if you are in sin; in which case, were you to die now, you would not find peace, but punishment.

(b) It is the end of those things which pass away; of what use now to this young man all the pleasures of his youth ?

(c) Death is the hour of truth; now this youth knows what is true and what is false. That is false which has to be left behind; the only true thing at this moment for him is Christ. Take all the rest away and leave him with Christ and that will be more than enough to restore him to life.

3. *Do we learn the lessons death has to teach us?*

Do we know the real value of things ? Do we live with Christ, so as to rise with him after death ?

## The miracle

1. We say that it is the greatest of them all, from our point of view—because to raise from the dead seems impressive to us; more so than other miracles. But to God's power they are all easy, all the same.

2. But there is another resurrection no less miraculous than this one—the resurrection of a soul from sin.

(a) Again it is Jesus who draws near; we separate ourselves from him by our sins, but he will not leave us.

(b) As he touched the litter on which the young man was lying, so he touches our hearts by his grace.

(c) The young man sat up—grace needs our co-operation; we must awaken from the sleep, or better, the death of sin. We must do something on our part never to sin again; at least our good resolutions must be put into practice.

## I: Youth

### The needs of modern youth

1. *Arise:*

That command of Christ could be directed to so many of our modern youths of both sexes.

2. It is not merely a question of rising from a life of sin to the life of grace, although that, too, is necessary.

3. Rather it is a question of ideals. Let us examine this more closely.

### The spiritual economy

1. It begins with the intellect—truth. From the truth it receives its courage, resistance, hardness.

2. The main principle of a true life is this direction on the part of a mind guided and illuminated by truth. That is what makes a man.

3. Truth directs and inflames the will; the will is, to a certain extent, the slave of the mind.

(a) On many occasions the imagination will try to take over from the intellect;

(b) passions and appetites try to draw the will after them;

(c) a strong will, i.e. one guided by strong principles on the part of the intellect and strong motives, will not only refuse to be led away; it will use these things to obtain even greater strength.

### The need for an ideal

1. Obvious, because motive is the only thing which will move us to action.

2. This ideal, in the case of a Catholic youth, should be the call of Christ to follow him, not in a spirit of sentiment, but in the fight against the enemies of Christ, who are also the enemies of the soul. They are the world, the flesh, the devil. He has overcome them all; now he asks of us that we, too, win the victory in his name and by his power.

### In practice

1. *Living to the full the life of grace:*

(a) there will be difficulties at times;

(b) they may be so great as to discourage us;

(c) this has been felt by some of the greatest saints, therefore we need not worry;

(d) the great thing is to fight hard with and for Christ.

2. *His grace:*

It was sufficient for Mary the sinner of Magdala, St Augustine, Paul and so many others, and will be equally effective in our case. It has not lost one atom of its power.

3. *However, we must co-operate with it:*

(a) intellectually—by having a high ideal in this struggle;

(b) morally—keeping God's commandments;

(c) socially—by doing our best to help others to attain the truth and to keep the law of God.

4. *Above all:*

Confidence in Christ and confidence in ourselves when we keep near Christ.

### The secret of success

i. When King George VI came to the throne he sent a message to the youth of the Empire, in which he reminded them of the story of the man on a dangerous journey who had to pass through a dark and sinister wood.

IQS      FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2. A wise witch told him to put his hand in the hand of God and all would be well. So it proved to be and he passed through all the perils safely.

3. The King gave the same advice to youth and then said that, although the times were difficult for the country, he, as King, intended to do the same; he would put his hand in that of God and have confidence.

4. There could be no better advice given to youth than this. Psalm 23 contains a summary of the same advice.

5. Youth should have confidence; the Church and Christ look to our Catholic youth to undertake many really great tasks for God.

(a) These can only be done by youth—old age is too stable, not flexible enough;

(b) middle age is too cautious perhaps;

(c) they need the impetuosity, the energy, the zeal of youth.

6. Courage, zeal, imagination, anxiety (in the true sense of the word) at the problems which face the world—all these are demanded.

All can be obtained through and with Christ, as our leader, following his footsteps as closely as possible, living up to his ideals.



*Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

THE CURE OF THE MAN WITH  
DROPSY

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Ephesians 3. 13-21

Gospel: Luke 14. 1-11

Texts concerning the worship of God

i. *The Christian cult:*

But the time is coming, nay, has already come, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; such men as these the Father claims for his worshippers. God is a spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4. 23-24.

These occupied themselves continually with the apostles' teaching, their fellowship in the breaking of bread, and the fixed times of prayer. Acts 2. 42.

When the new week began, we had met for the breaking of bread, and Paul was preaching to them. . . . Acts 20. 7.

And here is a warning I have for you. I can give you no praise for holding your assemblies in a way that does harm, not good. From the first, when you meet in church, there are divisions among you; so I hear, and in some measure believe it.... And when you assemble together, there is no opportunity to eat a supper of the Lord; each comer hastens to eat the supper he has brought for himself, so that one man goes hungry, while another has drunk deep. Have you no homes to eat and drink in, that you should shew contempt to God's church, and shame the poor? Praise you? There is no room for praise here. The tradition which I received from the Lord, and handed on to you, is that the Lord Jesus, on the night "when he was being betrayed, took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, given up for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. And so with the cup, when supper was ended, This cup, he said, is the new testament, in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, for a commemoration of me. So it is the Lord's death that you are heralding, whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, until he comes; and therefore, if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, he will be held to account for the Lord's body and blood. A man must examine himself first, and then eat of that bread and drink of that cup; he is eating and

drinking damnation to himself if he eats and drinks unworthily, not recognizing the Lord's body for what it is. i Cor. 11. 17-29.

2. *Worship according to the example and teachings of Christ:*

Whereupon he said to them, Have you never read of what David did, when he and his followers were hungry ? How he went into the tabernacle, and ate the loaves set out there before God, although neither he nor his followers, nor anyone else except the priests had a right to eat them ? Or again, have you not read in the Law that the priests violate the sabbath rest in the temple, and none blames them ? And I tell you there is one standing here who is greater than the temple. If you had found out what the words mean, It is mercy, not sacrifice, that wins favour with me, you would not have passed judgement on the guiltless. The Son of Man has even the sabbath at his disposal. Matt. 12. 3-8.

Then he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went into the synagogue there, as his custom was, on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. Luke 4. 16.

And on another sabbath day it happened that he went into the synagogue to teach ... Luke 6. 6.

... was a sabbath day on which he was preaching in one of the synagogues. ... Luke 13. 10.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

### I. LITURGICAL

*of by the spirit:*

It is obvious that the Church, in today's Mass, repeats many instructions she has delivered during the other Sundays after Pentecost. Like any wise teacher, she repeats herself when it is something important she has to offer. One of these fundamental ideas is that of walking according to the guidance of the spirit. As for the Epistles for the other Sundays after Pentecost will show how many times this idea is repeated.

*of impotence:*

One fundamental idea in the spiritual life. In this sense the Mass of today has a connection with that of the Good Samaritan, in that it is Christ himself who presents himself as the healer. He, the most humble of men, is the cure for pride.

The idea of the real need we have for God's help is insisted upon in the Introit, Offertory and Communion. The two former prayers are cries to God for help, coming from the afflicted spirit of one who feels himself unable to cope with life as it stands. The Collect is not a treatise on actual grace ; the need we have of the divine aid

if we are to do anything. God's grace goes before us and accompanies us in all that we do.

## II EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Ephesians 3. 13-21

#### 1. *Occasion and argument:*

The Epistle to the Ephesians has, like most of the letters of St Paul, two parts, one dogmatic and the other moral in its argument. The dogmatic section ends with a wonderful prayer to God, in which there are various petitions, all of which breathe the inner sentiments of Paul's heart, especially those connected with the Mystery of Christ. It is enough to give a brief comment on them and leave them for points of meditation.

#### 2. *Texts:*

##### (a) Let there be no discouragement, then . . .

In the previous verses he has described the importance of his ministry to Jew and Gentile alike. He tells them not to be discouraged at his present trials, because these only prove his love for his disciples and his mission. They are not a glory for Paul but for the Ephesians themselves . . . it is the common faith that matters.

##### (b) I fall on my knees to the Father . . .

For all the mysteries whose secrets have been opened to him and for those which have changed him into an apostle, in thanksgiving for all the graces of redemption, whose minister he is—for all this he goes on his knees in thanksgiving. The Jews prayed standing; the phrase indicates humble prayer.

##### (c) That Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title . . .

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The thought of Paul is that all things have received their being from God, but also that being contains the idea of children of God. The theme of this verse is the creative omnipotence of God, which forces us to turn to him as a Father who loves us.

##### (d) May he, out of the rich treasury of his glory . . .

Today's Epistle contains five petitions directed by Paul to the Father:

- i. that God may fortify us through the work of the Holy Spirit within us;
- ii. that Christ may reign through faith in our hearts;
- iii. that our religious life may be founded on love;
- iv. that the faithful may understand the depths of the love of Christ for them;
- v. that they may all be filled with the fullness of God.



The first petition is in verse 16. The phrase 'your innermost being' is used by Paul in two senses; one, that of the rational being with moral intellectual faculties; as in Rom. 7. 22-25; the second, in the sense of a man re-born through grace and under the influence of the spirit (2 Cor. 4. 16). His petition is that this inner man, reborn through grace and sanctified by the spirit, may be fortified, may give himself up entirely to the influence of that spirit, and may be nothing else but a true Christian in his thoughts, words and actions, a temple of the Holy Spirit, from whom he receives life. If this is carried out, then religion will become the true guide and dominant influence in the life of the faithful and in all that they do. Paul asks and prays that this fortifying of the interior man may be in proportion to the glory of God, whom he begs to pour out his graces with generosity and power, just as he did in the work of our redemp-

tion. May Christ find a dwelling place, through faith, in your hearts.

This is the second petition. Every Christian should be able to express in his own words: I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2. 20). On this occasion the apostle wants this life of Christ in our hearts to be so stable, so imbued with the Holy Spirit, that we would be enough to see a Christian in order to see Christ. Our life in Christ and his life in us, thanks to faith, corner baptism. This faith of which he speaks is not merely the intellectual assent to divine teaching; it is that faith which works in charity (John 14. 23; Gal. 5. 6). It includes an impulse towards God, the principle and the goal of revelation. The Christian who has turned his heart into a dwelling-place for Christ has not room for sin and there is no place for it in his life.

May your lives be rooted in love . . .

The third prayer is a consequence of the former. The life of Christ in the hearts of his disciples shows itself in charity', which embraces all his followers. It is then that a man becomes strong; that he is able to understand the length and breadth, height and depth of the mystery of the redemption.

Love makes the intellect keener, and so the more our lives are permeated by the love of Christ the more perfectly shall we understand his mysteries and the intimate link up between all the truths of faith. Christ is known, in this sense, according as he is loved, the specific object of this knowledge at the moment in Paul's mind is the abundance of God's gifts to men as typified in Christ, no man without love, without grace, could perhaps write a magnificent treatise on dogmatic theology, but a St Thérèse would know better than he what it means to love and to know God, what is the love of Christ for us and his work within us. Love produces a

kind of intuitive knowledge of the thing loved, and supernatural love above all produces an increase of graces which, on its part, enlightens the mind to see things in the right way. This means, in effect, to live the truths which are thus made more clear in our minds.

(g) the love of Christ, to know what passes knowledge:

The fourth petition; the knowledge of the love of Christ which is based on our own spiritual experience, and then we shall see that no amount of knowledge will ever exhaust those riches of Christ.

(h) May you be filled with all the completion which God has to give:

The knowledge of the charity of Christ will fill us with love, then will take place that mutual connection and influence; grace increasing love, and love increasing grace within us, until the God who is love fills our hearts.

(i) He whose power is at work in us ...

A doxology with which Paul ends this dogmatic section of the Epistle.

### 3. *Applications:*

There are so many that it would be impossible to mention them all or even to give a summary of them. Much has been written about the Mystery of Christ, and no matter how much is written, it can all be reduced to the development of the symphony of his love, manifested by the redemption and our incorporation in him as our Head. From this incorporation and our divine sonship by adoption follows the brotherhood of all men, to which the apostle refers in verse 14.

What is more, the power of the Spirit and the knowledge which he will give us of the love of Christ and of the whole depths of the riches of this mystery afford ample scope for themes for preaching.

## B: The Gospel: Luke 14. 1-11

### i. *Occasion and argument:*

(a) The last journey of the Lord:

This last journey of Christ from Galilee to Jerusalem presents many difficulties from the chronological point of view. Christ left Galilee, after complaining about the three main cities there, Capharnaum, Bethsaida and Corozain. He leaves the north and moves into Judaea, where he spends several months. During those months he went several times to Jerusalem and even made one or two hurried visits to Galilee, on one of which he healed the ten lepers. The story in today's Gospel took place during those first few months and possibly in the region on the other side of the Jordan, where the Jewish hatred was not so strong. This passage contains



the scene, but with two very different parts; in the one we have the cure of the sick man, and the question of whether or not it was lawful to heal on the sabbath; while in the second we have a lesson in humility.

During his stay in Judaea Christ enters into a synagogue on the sabbath and begins to preach. Among those present there was a woman who had been ill for eighteen years, so bent, from arthritis possibly, that she could not look up. Seeing this, Christ says to her: Woman, thou art rid of thy infirmity. The woman, cured, at once begins to give thanks to God, but the ruler of the synagogue, not willing to attack Jesus directly, addresses the multitude: You have six days on which work is allowed; you should come and be healed on those days, not on the sabbath. For this zealous man the miracle means nothing—it is the sabbath which is all-important. Christ is indignant. What, you hypocrites, he says, is there any one of you that will not untie his ox or his ass from the stall and take them down to water, when it is the sabbath? Truly, the untying of a knot was one of the things mentioned in the thirty-nine groups of actions forbidden on the sabbath day. However, in the case of domestic animals it was permitted. Christ goes on to the logical conclusion. And here is this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound these eighteen years past; was it wrong that she should be delivered on the sabbath day from bonds like these? It was a common thing to attribute all illness to Satan. If there was any day of the week when it would be opportune to demonstrate the victory of Good over evil, surely it was the sabbath!

(b) The second scene:

This takes place, not in the synagogue, but in the house of one of the notable Pharisees, who had invited Jesus to eat with him. Again it is the sabbath and the Pharisees are on the watch for him. Suddenly the occasion appears; a man with dropsy comes to Jesus in the hope of being cured. Then Christ turns to the lawyers and Pharisees and asks them: Is healing allowed on the sabbath day? They kept silent, even though in many of their writings the question had already been discussed and solved. Seeing this, Christ takes the man by the hand and sends him away cured. Afterwards he turns to those who would not reply to his question and says: Is there any of you who will not pull out his ass or his ox immediately, if it falls into a pit on the sabbath? According to Luke, this also went without an answer.

(c) The first seats at the table:

The lack of bitterness against Christ among these Pharisees of Transjordan is amply demonstrated by the fact that the meal went on a long time and that many were the questions brought up for discussion, beginning with this one of the first seats at table.



They would not have been Pharisees if they had not sought the places of honour nearest the host: That couch is mine; no, it is mine, who am more worthy. Who do you think you are? More worthy? I am older and more learned than you are, etc., etc.... For people who lived entirely by externals these petty questions of precedence were very important. Christ intervenes, comments on what is happening and then puts them to shame by showing them that they are not even sufficiently intelligent to know the best means of obtaining what they want.

(d) Eternal reward :

Having put them to shame in this way, Christ goes on to teach them another lesson; he teaches them how to obtain, not the material advantage of a return invitation, but a spiritual one—an eternal reward for kindness and charity. When they give hospitality it should be to those in need; the cripples, the lame, the blind. Then he adds that the reward will come when they just rise again. It is plain that this is a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, as are so many other things which Jesus said and did; it is not an earthly-reward which should be sought, but a heavenly one. Treasures in heaven! It is more blessed to give than to receive.

2. *Texts:*

(a) As he went into the house . . .

The first lesson—Christ assisted at a social function, such as this meal. The Lord's Day is not a sad day of the week, nor is it forbidden, once our religious obligations have been fulfilled, to take lawful recreation, and rest from the weekly labours. It is also clear that Christ did not refuse such invitations, even when they came from his enemies.

(b) they were watching him.

These Pharisees of Transjordan were not bitter enemies, like the others, but neither were they friends; they show us on this occasion an example of the kind of person who smiles at us to our face and then destroys our reputation or good name in secret. If there is one thing we must hate it is this false hypocrisy. Christ himself was kind and patient with all who were stupid, forgiving to the woman taken in adultery; his last words of mercy were for a robber; but we find him full of anger and uttering the most terrible threats against hypocrisy.

(c) Here his eye was met by the sight of a man who had the dropsy.

Perhaps the very Pharisees had planted him there to see what Christ would do and so bring up the old question of healing on the sabbath. The dilemma was obvious; Christ would have to choose between the doctrine of the Pharisees and his mercy.

(cl) Is healing allowed on the sabbath day ?

Christ gets the question in first; he wishes them to solve it. There is no need to go very deeply into this question. The law of the Pharisees was very strict on the point and their interpretation of the law had made it ridiculous and impossible. However, in treating with Jesus, even the Pharisees went beyond their own strict interpretation of the law; the reason is simple. They could not deny the fact of his miracles, but it is difficult at times to distinguish between wonders done by God and those which the devil can produce, as a fallen angel. The only clue is this: in the wonders wrought by Satan there will always be something evil, something which reveals their origin. If they could show that, in working his miracles, Jesus disobeyed the law of Moses, then it might help to discredit him in the eyes of the people.

In this case he himself accuses them of going beyond even their own strict interpretation of the law, since although they said that it was unlawful even to untie a knot on the sabbath, there were exceptions to this rule, in the case of domestic animals or sudden emergencies. To pull an ox or ass out of a pit into which it has fallen is a harder task than that of untying a simple knot. Yet they allowed it. Christ, who could not even see a case of sickness without doing something about it, argues with them in such terms that they are silenced—there is no reply, and they know it.

(e) do not sit down in the chief place . . .

The parable, if it can be called one, is so clear that there is little need to explain it. Our Lord is here giving them a rule of prudent conduct based on Proverbs 25. 6-7; and also a lesson in humility. But undoubtedly his thoughts are fixed on that heavenly banquet at his coming, in which the Father will give the highest places in heaven to the humble of heart. That the humble shall be exalted is the real lesson of this parable.

### 3. *Applications:*

In selecting the texts from the writings of the Fathers and other spiritual authors our intention has been to insist on two points ; first, the true Christian concept of adoration and religion. Our religious life must be interior and exterior. Interior, because otherwise it is hypocrisy; exterior, because we are men, made up of material and spiritual, and also have social obligations as a community. The two elements must be joined in such a way that the interior spirit dominates the exterior, but both are necessary.

In our exterior cult the day of days is Sunday, when Mass is of obligation. The desire of the Church has always been that the Sunday Mass should be a social, as well as an individual act of worship. This is true of the family group as much as it is true of the parish as a whole. There is nothing which serves to keep the family

united so much as prayer in common, especially when that prayer is the finest of all prayers—the Mass.

The second idea is that of humility and a despising of the honours offered by this world—a theme which we have spoken about very frequently already.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST GREGORY NAZIANZEN

(Some extracts from his apologia entitled *The Christian Philosopher*)

#### Counsels on various subjects

##### 1. *Age:*

Are you still in the flower of youth ? Then you will fight valiantly against all sinful movements of the soul and will reap the harvest of not giving in to those inclinations to which such an age is exposed. Instead you will give proof of aged prudence in a young and virile body, and you will obtain more pleasure from this victory than from any crown awarded in the games. Because then you will win the palm before the whole world, a palm beyond compare.

Are you entering on old age ? If so, you will not allow your spirit to grow old, but will await death as a time of your certain liberty; you will go forth from this, full content with that state which comes afterwards, in which none are children, nor are there any old men, but all are perfect adults in the state of perfection.

##### 2. *Bodily beauty:*

Have you beauty of body ? Then see to it that the beauty of your soul will stand comparison with it. Has that flower of beauty passed ? Has it closed, so that now it cannot be seen, perhaps even seeming ugly to the sight ? Well, it will still be wonderful in beauty in regard to those things which are not visible. Like the rose, which is changed later into a berry neither flowering nor perfumed. He who was the most beautiful of all the sons of men (Ps. 44. 3) wastes no time in contemplating exteriors, but turns his eyes to what is within.

##### 3. *Health:*

Have you good health ? Then make use of that strength of body as well as possible; you will warn, reprove, pass the night in vigils, sleeping on the ground, weaken and debilitate the grossness of the body; discuss heavenly things and earthly, meditate with attention on death. Do you find yourself suffering some illness? You will



fight; and should you be overcome you will really gain the victory, namely that of never having to fight again.

4. *Riches:*

Do you possess an abundance of riches? If so, you will do what you can to become poorer; you will share your goods with the poor man, as if you were an administrator of goods not your own, so that he may be helped by the benefits he receives and be reunited to God. Do you find yourself in need? You will have God for your riches, you will laugh at the rich, as at people who, for all their wealth, are nevertheless poor, because they have need of many things. They drink, only to thirst the more.

Are you troubled by hunger? You will feed together with the birds of the air, who sow not, neither do they reap; you will live like Elias in the house of the widow woman; the crock of oil will not diminish nor the flour. . . .

Are you thirsty? The fountains and rivers will give you to drink, but a drink which does not make you drunk nor is it given in any measure. Are you cold? The same thing happened to St Paul.

5. *Persecutions and insults:*

But let us turn our attention to things which are more perfect. Are you attacked with insults? You will overcome by not returning them. Are you afflicted by persecutions? You will put up with them. Are you the object of cursings? You will exhort and beseech. Calumnies? You will pray. Are you struck on the right cheek? You will also present the other, and even a third if you had it, better to exhort him who wounds you to use meekness and kindness, teaching in deeds what you cannot put into words. Are you the object of hate? Christ will be honoured by your company in his affliction; even were you to be called a Samaritan, accused of working through the medium of the devil; you will receive all this, together with your God. However much you may have suffered, there are still many trials for you to undergo; there is the gall, crown of thorns, the sceptre of reed, the purple garment, the cross, the nails, the thieves crucified with you and the mocking passers-by. It is meet that God should carry the greater burden, being made an object of scorn for having suffered more torments and cruelties.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Some extracts from Serm. 88. PL. 38, 539-540)

A: Christ, our physician, yesterday and today

1. *Our physician:*

You know well, as I do, that our God and Saviour Jesus Christ is the physician of our eternal salvation and that, if he has taken on

him our infirmities, it is so that they may not last for ever. He took upon himself our mortal body to destroy death in it, although crucified in our weakness, as the apostle says, he lies in the power of God (2 Cor. 13. 4). And since he can no longer die, death hath no more dominion over him. (Rom. 6. 9.) These points of doctrine are very clear in our faith; just as you know that his miracles serve[for our spiritual learning, so that we may know what it is which will not pass or ever have an end. He opened the eyes of the blind, those eyes which death would one day close; he raised Lazarus, who would have to meet death again; but all he did for the health of the body was not done so that they would last for ever, even though one day he intends to give them immortality, but so that, since what is not seen is not believed, faith in the invisible might be increased by means of things visible.

## 2. *The gift of faith:*

Christ did all that to invite us to believe, and that faith is fervent today in the Church, spread over the whole world; now there are greater cures performed, those cures for which he deigned to perform those lesser ones. As the soul is worth more than the body, so the health of the soul is better than the health of the body. Now it is not the body without sight which is cured by the Lord. It is the blind heart which opens its eyes to his words. Now he may not raise up a mortal body, but he raises the soul which lies dead in a living body. Nowadays it is not the deaf bodily ears which are opened, but many there are with deaf hearts, and these are opened when the Word of God enters therein, so that those who did not believe may have the faith, that they may live well who lived evil lives and the disobedient may obey.

Sometimes we say: That man believes, and we are astonished because we knew his hardness of heart. But why do you wonder when you see him believe, become an innocent servant of God; it is because he sees, whom you knew to be blind; he lives, whom you thought to be dead; because you notice that he now hears, whom you knew was deaf?

## B: The three kinds of pardon

### 1. *Baptismal:*

In Holy Scripture we find three possible kinds of penance. Even in order to approach baptism, in which all sins are wiped out, it is necessary to do penance for the former life. No one can take on a new life without being sorry for the old one. . . .

### 2. *Penance in alms and pardon:*

Now let me speak to you about another kind of penance. .. which is at our disposal every day. How shall I prove to you that this exists ?



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I can find no better quotation with which to support my claim than the daily prayer which Christ taught us and in which he shows us that we must ask the Father to: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And what debtors are these of whom he speaks? They can only be our sins.. .. Here he teaches us to pray and also gives the answer to him who prays. He knows how these things are dealt with in heaven and how we should make our petitions. Do you wish to be forgiven? Then forgive.

What have you that you can give to the God from whom you beg so much? Does Christ still walk this earth? Can you receive him into your house with joy? Can you give him hospitality and a meal, like Aiartha? He needs not such things who sits at the right hand of the Father; but when you do it to one of these little ones, you do it to me....

Give to the poor and the hungry, and perhaps you will have less than you had before, but it will be in your own house, not in heaven, and perhaps even on this earth, he to whom you have given in order to obey Christ may reward you. . . . You are God's workman; when you give to a poor man you sow in the winter that you may reap in summer. Why do you fear, as a pagan might, that such a great Lord and father of his family, living in such a great house, will not feed his workmen? There will be more than enough for your clothing; God "will always give enough to those in need, but not to the avaricious. Extend your hand and work with courage!

### 3. *Alms:*

Of course you will notice, as I have said, that there is less in your own home when you give alms, because you cannot see it until God returns it to you. But tell me; when you pardon from your heart are your goods diminished? When you forgive one who has sinned against you, have you less in your heart? You pardon, and you lose nothing. A fountain of charity has entered your heart and springs forth there in abundance. You hold on to some hatred against your brother? You have blocked up the fountain. When you pardon, not only have you not lost anything, but you have received an abundance. Charity never leads to scarcity....

I will be avenged, you say; he shall pay for it; I will make him see to it. Yes; you burn with hate, you are consumed with it, you are restless—you who, had you pardoned, might have been safe, you might have prayed in safety. What is it you have to do? Pray. But how can you? You are full of hate and anger, you threaten revenge, you do not pardon from the heart. The time for prayer has arrived, you begin to say those words and at last you reach the phrase which I have mentioned. What do you do? Do you refuse to forgive your enemy? Then you separate yourself from Christ. Yes; you stop praying and you do not wish to say: Forgive us our debts as we



forgive our debtors, because you do not dare to continue; lest he should say to you : I forgive you as you forgive others. You do not dare to say it because you do not dare to forgive....

4. *Sacramental penance*:

It only remains for me to talk about the last kind of penance. . . . There exists another kind of penance in the Church which is harder and more difficult; which is that of the penitents who are prevented from sharing in the Sacrament of the altar, lest by receiving it unworthily, they should eat and drink their own condemnation. It is a difficult penance; perhaps they have committed homicide, perhaps adultery or sacrilege. A grave affair and a serious wound; but the physician is omnipotent.

After the temptation and the delectation you pass to acts. You are like a corpse which is four days in the tomb, evil smelling, but the Lord does not abandon you even then, instead he cries out: Lazarus, come forth. The evil of the tomb gives way before the voice of mercy; death gives way to life. It gives way, but in bonds, as men are in bonds who make their confession. They come forth from death, because if they had not confessed they would never have left that sad state. Confession means to come forth from that dark place. But what does the Lord say to his Church : Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Christ hands Lazarus over to the Church when he tells his disciples to loose his bonds.

Some say that we increase sin by promising to sinners the way of sacramental penance. But were this door to be shut, would the sinner not add far more sins to those he has already committed, in desperation at not finding pardon? Then one would say: I have sinned; I have committed a crime and I cannot wait for it to be pardoned through the penance which I may do. I shall be condemned. Why, then, should I not live as I please. Since I cannot find charity here, at least I can satisfy my desires. Why should I deny myself anything ? They have closed their doors to me; even though I should mortify myself here below, I still lose. Since I cannot attain the future life, why should I not obtain some pleasure from this and do what is wrong, but which is at least agreeable ?

If you close the door to sacramental penance you will increase sin through desperation. But just as God provided a remedy so that despair should not increase the number of sins, so he knows well how to give us hope, so as not to increase their number. . . . So that despair will not increase their number he has opened the door of sacramental confession; so that hope will not increase them, he has kept secret from us the moment of our death.

## III. ST BERNARD

## On the grades of humility

(Extracts from his sermon on the subject)

i. *The way of humility:*

The way is by the road of humility, which leads to truth ; one is work, the other a reward. How do we know that he is talking about ire, when he says merely : I am the way. See how clearly i this when he says: Learn of me, because I am meek and heart. He gives us himself as a model of humility and If you follow him and imitate him you will not walk in >ut in the full light of life. Because what is the light of life h?

*to light and truth:*

ghts up the whole man, and even' man who comes into showing him where true life is. That is why, after saying: ay, he adds : and life. As if he would tell us : I am the way Is to truth; I am the truth which promises life; I am the is given you. Truly; this is eternal life, that they may know >nly true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

*our strength to follow this road:*

ay: I consider the road to be followed, namely, humility; s fruit, which is truth; but, alas, what is to become of me >urs which await me are so tiring that I am afraid of never t the desired goal ? To this the Lord answers : I am the way, um which will sustain you on the road. He shouts out to ) have erred and have mistaken the road through ignorance to them: I am the way. He calls out to those who are l those who doubt through lack of faith, I am the truth; ) those who faint at the up-hill climb, I am the life. I think efficiently proved that, from this very' chapter of the Gospel, ;e of the truth is the fruit of humility. Father, who art Lord i and earth, I give thee praise that thou hast hidden all this the secrets of the truth) from the wise and prudent, and it to little children (who are the humble). It is clear from this : the truth,hidden from the proud, is revealed to the humble.

*lition of humility:*

ility may be defined thus: it is a virtue by which man, ring and seeing his own defects and miseries, thinks little self.

*rity the goal attained through humility:*

le to me, all ye that labour and are burdened ; I will give you Lome, he says. Where? To me, who am the truth. How? By

humility. With what hope of results ? I will give you rest. But what kind of rest and help is this which Truth promises to those who climb the steep hill and which he gives to those who have already reached the summit? Possibly it is charity. Because St Benedict says that it is to this virtue that the monk attains once he has ascended by all the steps of humility. O sweet and gentle food of charity, which refreshes those who are tired, gives new strength to the weak, fills the sad hearts with joy and for all of us makes the yoke of Truth sweet and his burden light.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### Magnanimity, Presumption and Ambition

##### i. *Magnanimity*:

##### (a) It is concerned with honours:

Magnanimity, by its very name, denotes stretching forth of the mind to great things . . . a man is said to be magnanimous chiefly because he is minded to do some great act.

Now an act may be called great in two ways; in one way proportionately, in another absolutely. An act may be called great proportionately, even if it consist in the use of some small or ordinary thing, if, for instance, one make a very good use of it; but an act is simply and absolutely great when it consists in the best use of the greatest things (2-2. q. 129 a. 1. c).

On the other hand, some passions have great power of resistance to reason arising from the external things themselves that are the objects of those passions; such are the love of money or of honour. And for these it is necessary to have a virtue not only regarding that which is greatest in those passions, but also about that which is ordinary or little; because things external, though they be little, are very desirable, as being necessary for human life. Hence with regard to the desire of money there are two virtues, one about ordinary or little sums of money, namely liberality, and another about large sums of money, namely magnificence . . . with regard to great honours there is magnanimity. Wherefore we must conclude that the proper matter of magnanimity is great honour and that a magnanimous man tends to such things as are deserving of honour [*ibid.* a. 2).

He that makes good use of great things is much more able to make good use of little things. Accordingly the magnanimous man looks upon great honours as a thing of which he is worthy, or even little honours as something he deserves, because, to wit, man cannot sufficiently honour virtue which deserves to be honoured by God.



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Hence he is not uplifted by great honours, because he does not deem them above him; rather does he despise them, and much more such as are ordinary or little. In like manner he is not cast down by dishonour, but despises it, since he recognizes that he does not deserve it (*ibid, ad yum*).

### (b) Its relation to humility:

There is in man something great which he possesses through the gift of God, and something defective which accrues to him through the weakness of nature. Accordingly', magnanimity makes a man deem himself worthy' of great things in consideration of the gifts he holds from God; thus if his soul is endowed with great virtue, magnanimity makes him tend to perfect works of virtue; and the same is to be said of the use of any other good, such as science or external fortune. On the other hand, humility makes a man think little of himself in consideration of his own deficiency, and magnanimity makes him despise others in so far as they' fall away from God's gifts; since he does not think so much of others as to do anything wrong for their sake. Yet humility makes us honour others and esteem them better than ourselves, in so far as we see some of God's gifts in them... (a. 3. *ad um*).

### (c) Its relation to fortitude:

It is clear that magnanimity agrees with fortitude in confirming the mind about some difficult matter; but it falls short thereof, in that it confirms the mind about a matter wherein it is easier to stand firm. Hence magnanimity is reckoned a part of fortitude, because it is annexed thereto as secondary to principal (art. 5. c).

### (d) Confidence and magnanimity:

Now it has been stated that magnanimity' is chiefly about the hope of something difficult. Wherefore, since confidence denotes a certain strength of hope arising from some observation which gives one a strong opinion that one will obtain a certain good, it follows that confidence belongs to magnanimity (art. 6. c).

### (e) Security and magnanimity:

As the philosopher says: fear makes a man take counsel, because, to wit, he takes care to avoid what he fears. Now security takes its name from the removal of this care, of which fear is the cause; wherefore security denotes perfect freedom of the mind from fear, just as confidence denotes strength of hope. Now, as hope directly' belongs to magnanimity, so fear directly regards fortitude. Wherefore as confidence belongs immediately to magnanimity', so security belongs immediately to fortitude.

It must be observed, however, that as hope is the cause of daring, so is fear the cause of despair. . . . Wherefore as confidence belongs indirectly to fortitude, in so far as it makes use of daring, so security'

belongs indirectly to magnanimity, in so far as it banishes despair (art. 7).

### What the magnanimous does and avoids:

Since the magnanimous tends to great things, it follows that he tends chiefly to things that involve a certain excellence, and shuns those that imply defect. Now it savours of excellence that a man is beneficent, generous and grateful. Wherefore he shows himself ready to perform actions of this kind, but not as acts of the other virtues. On the other hand it is a proof of defect, that a man thinks so much of certain external goods or evils, that for their sake he abandons or gives up justice or any virtue whatever. Again, all concealment of the truth indicates a defect, because by so doing the mind seems to give way to external evils. Wherefore these and like things the magnanimous man avoids under a special aspect, inasmuch as they are contrary to his excellence or greatness (art. 4. *ad 2uni*).

### 2. *Presumption*:

#### (a) A sin:

Hence it is vicious and sinful, as contrary to the natural order, that anyone should assume to do that which is above his power: and this is what is meant by presumption, as its very name shows.

#### (b) Opposed to magnanimity by excess:

Magnanimity observes the mean, not as regards the quality of that to which it tends, but in proportion to our own ability; for it does not tend to anything greater than is becoming to us.

Now the presumptuous man, as regards that to which he tends, does not exceed the magnanimous, but sometimes falls far short of him: but he does exceed in proportion to his own ability, whereas the magnanimous man does not exceed his. It is in this way that presumption is opposed to magnanimity by excess (q. 130. a. 2. c).

### 3. *Ambition*:

#### (a) It is a sin:

Honour denotes reverence shown to a person in witness of his excellence. Now two things have to be considered with regard to man's honour. The first is that man has not from himself the thing in which he excels, for this is, as it were, something divine in him, wherefore honour is due principally, not to him but to God. The second point that calls for observation is that the thing in which man excels is given to him by God, that he may profit others thereby: wherefore a man ought so far to be pleased that others bear witness to his excellence, as this enables him to profit others.

Now the desire of honour may be inordinate in three ways. First, when a man desires recognition of an excellence which he has not;

*this is* to desire more than his share of honour. Secondly, when a man desires honour for himself without referring it to God. *Thirdly, when a man's appetite rests in honour itself, without referring it to the profit of others. Since then* ambition denotes inordinate desire of honour, it is evident that it is always a sin (*q. 131. a. 1. c.*).

(*b*) **Opposed to magnanimity:**

Ambition signifies inordinate love of honour. Now magnanimity is above honours and makes use of them in a becoming manner. Wherefore it is evident that ambition is opposed to magnanimity' as the inordinate to that which is well ordered (*art. 2. c.*).

(*c*) *Dignities:*

Honour is due to those who are in a position of dignity, on account of a certain excellence of their estate: and accordingly inordinate desire for positions of dignity' pertains to ambition. For if a man were to have an inordinate desire for a position of dignity', not for the sake of honour, but for the sake of a right use of a dignity exceeding his ability, he would not be ambitious but presumptuous (*a. 2 ad 2um*).

G » »

SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

Love for honours

1. *Perfection demands that we despise honours:*

; f »

I believe myself that a soul which attains to this state neither speaks nor does anything of itself, but that this sovereign King takes care of all that it has to do. Oh, my God, how clear is the meaning of that verse about asking for the wings of a dove and how right the author was—and how right we shall all be!—to ask for them! It is evident that he is referring to the flight taken by the spirit when it soars high above all created things, and above itself first of all; but it is a gentle and a joyful flight and also a silent one.

What power is that of a soul brought hither by the Lord, which can look upon everything without being ensnared by it! How ashamed it is of the time when it was attached to everything! How amazed it is at its blindness! How it pities those who are still blind, above all if they are persons of prayer to whom God is still granting favours! It would like to cry aloud to them and show them how mistaken they are, and sometimes it does in fact do so and brings down a thousand persecutions upon its head....

It is weary of the time when it paid heed to niceties concerning its own honour, and of the mistaken belief which it had that what the



world calls honour is really so. It now knows that to be a sheer lie and a lie in which we are all living. It realizes that genuine honour is not deceptive, but true; that it values what has worth and despises that which has none; for what passes away and is not pleasing to God, is worth nothing and less than nothing. It laughs at itself and at the time when it set any store by money and coveted it.... What is there that can be bought with this money which people desire? Is there anything valuable? Is there anything lasting? If not, why do we desire it? It is but a miserable ease with which it provides us and one that costs us very dear. Often it provides hell for us; it buys us eternal fire and endless affliction. Oh, if all would agree to consider it as useless dross, how well the world would get on, and how little trafficking there would be! How friendly we should all be with one another if nobody were interested in money and honour! I really believe this would be a remedy for everything.

*2. The desire for honours in spiritual people:*

When the Lord begins to implant a virtue in us, it must be esteemed very highly and we must on no account run the risk of losing it. So it is in matters concerning our reputation and in many others. Your Reverence can be quite sure that we are not all completely detached when we think we are and it is essential that we should never be careless about this. If any person wishing to make progress in spiritual matters finds that he is becoming punctilious about his reputation, let him believe what I say and put this attachment right behind him, for it is a chain which no file can sever: only God can break it with the aid of prayer and effort on our part. It seems to me to be an impediment on this road and I am amazed at the harm it does. I see some people whose actions are very holy and who do such wonderful things that everyone is astonished at them. God bless me, then! Why are such souls still on earth? How is it that they have not reached the summit of perfection? What is the reason for this? What can it be that is impeding one who is doing so much for God? Why, simply his punctiliousness about his reputation! And the worst of it is that this sort of person will not realize that he is guilty of such a thing, the reason sometimes being that the devil tells him that punctiliousness is incumbent upon him.

Let such people believe me, then; for the love of the Lord let them believe this little ant, for she speaks because it is the Lord's will that she should do so. If they fail to remove this caterpillar, it may not hurt the whole tree, for some of the other virtues will remain, but they will all be worm-eaten. The tree will not be beautiful; it will neither prosper itself nor allow the trees near it to do so, for the fruit of good example which it bears is not at all healthy and will not last for long. I repeat this; however slight may be our concern for our reputation, the result of it will be as bad as when

we play a wrong note, or make a mistake in time, in playing the organ—the whole passage will become discordant. Such concern is a thing which harms the soul whenever it occurs; but in the life of prayer it is pestilential.

You are trying to attain union with God. We want to follow the counsels of Christ, on whom were showered insults and false witness. Are we, then, so anxious to keep intact our reputation and credit? We cannot do so and yet attain to union, for the two ways diverge. When we exert our utmost efforts and try in various ways to forgo our rights, the Lord comes to the soul. Some will say: I have nothing to forgo: I never get an opportunity' of giving up anything. But if anyone has this determination I do not believe the Lord will ever allow him to lose so great a blessing. His Majesty will arrange so many ways in which he may gain this virtue that he will soon have more than he wants. I would urge you, then, to set to work and root out things which are of little or no consequence, just as I used to do when I began—or, at least, some of them. They are mere straws; and, as I have said, I throw them on the fire. I am incapable of doing more than that, but the Lord accepts it; may he be blessed for ever.

## II. ST FRANCIS DE SALES

### Simplicity

(The lack of simplicity of heart was something which Christ always attacked wherever he found it. St Francis has many delightful things to say about this virtue, but space forces us to limit ourselves to one passage on which he points out that it is, above all, a simple way to sanctity and a safe one. Cf. *Spiritual Conversations*, chap, xvi.)

#### 1. *Allow yourself to be guided by your superiors:*

Let us say a few words about that simplicity of heart which allows us to be guided by God and our superiors in spiritual matters. There are souls so confident of their own powers that they desire to be guided by none but the Holy Spirit, and they imagine that all the thoughts which come to their minds are inspirations from him; that he takes them by the hand and leads them in all that they undertake. They deceive themselves. Tell me, was there ever such a special vocation as that of St Paul, whom our Lord himself converted? Yet he did not choose to instruct him directly; instead he sent him to Damascus telling him that there he would find a man who would direct him (Acts 9. 4-7). St Paul could have replied: Lord, why do not you tell me? He did not even hint at such a thing but with simplicity did as he was told. Do we imagine that we are more favoured than St Paul, imagining that God himself will come to guide us without the help of any creature?...

2. *The safest way:*

Certainly, not all can follow the same path and not all know by which path God is calling them. Only our superiors, to whom God has granted a special light, can teach us this. We should not say: They do not know me well. We must believe that they do know us and be mindful of the fact that obedience and submission are certain signs of true inspiration. But I do not find consolation in the practices they lay down for me, while I find great pleasure in others. That may be, but neither the goodness of an action should be judged by the pleasure which it give us, nor is it necessary to cling to one's own satisfaction, because that would be to keep the flower and throw away the fruit. You will gain little advantage from practices of piety which you undertake to follow your own impulses, which are die results of self love. That love, under the pretext of good, only wishes to take pleasure in a vain esteem of itself. There is no doubt that our good consists in allowing ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit without any reserve; that is what true simplicity desires, that simplicity so often recommended by our Lord. Be simple as doves, he told us (Matt. 10. 16).

## m. BOSSUET

## On worldly honours

(Extracts or summary from a sermon preached before the Court on the Wednesday of the second week of Lent.)

1. *To detect true from false honour we must appreciate three things:*

- (a) the price and value of the things, to see if they are vain;
- (b) their conformity with reason, so as to see if vice is present;
- (c) the right order of things, so that when virtue receives its due honour, that shall be directed towards God, the author of all good things.

2. *Vain honour:*

We must be like children as far as any malice is concerned (i Cor. 14. 20) but not with regard to our sentiments and feelings. There is a childish element in all of us which age does not seem to mature, at least not easily—it can last a long time. The most childish of all man's defects is the seeking of honour in things which are only passing. So men seek to shine in exterior pomp rather than in the virtues of their life; ornaments of vanity rather than beauty of virtue. Chrysostom gives us the reason: Having lost the One Good, man tries to collect about him all these petty goods, begging on all sides for that glory which he can no longer find in his own conscience.

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Yet there is something great in all men—because all have been created to possess God. Just as God is great because he has nothing but himself, so man is only great when he has nothing but God. Yet in our pride we make the mistake of thinking that, in exterior things, we can find what has been lost when we lost God. People do not admire us, they admire our external splendour. Chrysostom says again: Exterior vanity is a sure sign of interior poverty.

3. *The chains of vanity:*

Vanity, if it only remained there, would not be so bad perhaps, but it reins in charity, and by drying up the source of alms, dries up also the graces of Christianity. But why talk about alms; vanity does not even permit a man to pay his debts at times; it places in danger maidens' virtue. . . .

Then there is the vanity of the learned men of our time who, as soon as they think they have a little talent, are capable of boring the whole world with their sayings and doings, and because they know how to arrange a few words in a certain order, or are capable of measuring a verse or two, they think that they are also capable of talking about anything and with authority.

4. *Evil honours:*

Evil cannot be praised for its own sake; but what if it takes on the appearances of virtue or necessity? Then it can deceive many. Is there anything worse than detraction? Yet, when it is disguised under the name of plain speaking, necessary criticism, etc., then all let it pass and it can even be taken for a virtue. Thus honour is given to vice. Those who do not know much about precious stones allow themselves to be deceived by false ones. So it is in this case. But God is not deceived; in his kingdom of justice and truth names matter little; it is the reality which counts.

5. *True honour:*

This is due to Christian virtue in all its forms, especially when it knows how to refer all honour and glory to God, to whom it is due. God is the only one who can, with justice, take all honour to himself. The rest of creatures have to admit that without God they can do nothing and are nothing. Therefore he is the one to whom they owe their virtue.

## IV. J.-B. MASSILLON

(Summary of parts of the sermon for the Wednesday in the third week of Lent.)

The purpose of the sermon is to correct two opposite errors; that of those who despise external practices of religion; and those who ignoring the essential part of the law—the internal—are content with externals merely.

1. *External religion is not a useless thing:*

It springs naturally from the interior love of God ; it is due to God ; it is also due to man, who is made up of body and soul. He is not pure spirit and needs these things to act on his interior fervour.

2. *It is commanded by revelation:*

We are told that we must confess with our lips what we believe in our hearts :

(a) to give glory to God ;

(b) so as not to hide entirely the secret favours he has granted us;

(c) so as to confute injustice and proclaim God to those who do not serve him;

(d) to edify our neighbours;

(e) to give strength to the weaker brethren against the attacks of the world ;

(f) to undo scandals and show our conversion openly;

(g) to console the just and help them to praise the divine mercy.

3. *It is not something for the simple people:*

But it does belong to holy simplicity to make use of it. Nor is it necessarily useless because some do, in fact, abuse it.

4. *Interior religion:*

God asks us for our hearts and religion is a thing of the heart. External practices, without interior piety, are useless—and perhaps more than useless. Yet in many other things, in hatreds, pleasures, projects for the future, etc., man's heart goes further than his exterior actions; but in religion this is not always the case. In religious matters it is so easy to be satisfied with the externals and allow the interior spirit of religion to diminish in us or vanish altogether. We think that we can even deceive the God who said that he would not be content with lip service. The example of the Jews should teach us that externals without the interior spirit are harmful. What really counts is the interior mortification.

5. *Conclusion:*

Avoid the two extremes. Prudent and solid virtue demands the mean; it is caprice merely which loves excesses. Let us add nothing of our own to our religion. From the moment we try to make an alloy between religion and our own tastes and pleasure, from that moment it is changed either into a cold, dry philosophy, dependent on reason, and with no room for things of the heart; or it becomes pure superstition, which both reason and faith despise and condemn.

SECTION VI. LITERARY COMMENTS

A: The Sabbath in the life of the Jewish people

The command to keep the sabbath day had more influence on the Jewish nation than any other, not just now and again, but every seven daN's. Any transgression of it would be noticed at once by anyone and more easily than other violations of the law. The doctors had made a list of thirty-nine occupations which were forbidden on the sabbath. But the evil did not lay in this, but in the way in which they were interpreted. In this, as in other things, the Pharisees inoculated a germ which was highly poisonous into the whole of the law.

Since our Lord was condemned on so many occasions for his violation of the sabbath we include here a summary of the more important precepts on this point, laid down by the doctors of the law.

According to the law it was forbidden to 'harvest' on the sabbath. The concept of harvesting was amplified to include such things as climbing a tree to throw down ripe figs. According to the doctors of the law no one could eat such fruits, nor even those which had fallen from the tree on the sabbath. For the same reason a housewife was forbidden to use eggs which the hen had laid on the sabbath.

The prophets had opposed the transit of great caravans of merchandise on the sabbath; but the doctors of the law, in their bad interpretation of this law, went to extremes. They included under the heading of 'carrying burdens' things like carrying the amount of food equivalent to a dried fig; or the quantity of wine sufficient to mix one glass, milk which could be drunk at one sip, honey which could be put on a wound, oil sufficient to anoint one small member and the quantity of water which is necessary for the bathing of the eyes. They even forbade the carrying of a purse on the sabbath, saying that it should be given to one who was not a Jew to carry or laid on a beast of burden. It was forbidden to carry from one place to another a piece of paper the size of a passport. Women could not leave their houses with a needle, a cake of soap or perfume or even a bottle of balm.

From this it is easy to see why these same doctors of the law protested when they saw the man who had been cured by Jesus carrying his litter on the sabbath.

Especially strict were the laws for curing wounds in the case of falls, and also those concerning the treatment of the sick. It is permitted, says one book of the law, to anoint and to rub, but it is not allowed to use much force or to give real massage. No artificial emetic may be taken. If it is a small child, it is not allowed to stretch out his legs to correct a rupture. In case of dislocations, the patient



may not move them by putting them in and out of water. He may only give them the usual washing, but nothing more must be done to cure him.

## B: Banquets in the East

One may say of the eastern manners what one says about its liturgy; the whole system is an incredible mixture of the greatest liberty and the most scrupulous precautions.

In such a warm climate men do not feel the need for much food; above all in the summer season with its great heat, hunger is lost. In the evenings comes the cool breeze from the west and the villages and towns come to life. Therefore usually, when the Bible speaks of official banquets, one has to understand the evening meal, with the setting sun and the cool breeze from the west.

Since the light enters usually through the doors, these were left open. It can be imagined that a house of one giving a feast then becomes like a theatre rather than a closed fortress, as ours are. He who wishes to do so, enters and looks around. Others gather at the doors and there they stay. The main rule of life is: God is with the one who goes slowly; haste is of the devil. As if they were not really interested, they go into the dining room, and beggars and the poor mingle with the guests as the most natural thing in the world. When Jesus recommends that the poor and needy should be invited to the feast this is something which enters into the plan of the oriental customs.

Each meal takes on the quality of a debate, with narratives and discourses; in such circumstance it is easy to lift the conversation to a high plane. Among the Pharisees it was considered good manners to speak of the Law during meals. Since these banquets constitute a social act, they were only given to one's friends; for which reason the Pharisees threw it up in the face of our Lord that he ate with publicans and sinners. To talk with such was bad enough, but to eat with them ... !

The external rite changed frequently in Palestine, since it lay between the two great nations of antiquity; but in the time of Christ it was usual to eat lying down. It is not certain if the guests lay on boards, mats or cushions. With regard to the conversations recorded during such meals, it is interesting to remember that each guest lay on his left elbow and was not facing all the others. The feet of all lay outside. Thus they could talk easily with their neighbour, but with those in front of them it was more difficult.

On entering the house a slave was waiting with water to wash the feet, dusty from the roads; before meals the hands were washed and anointed with oil. The host received his guests with an embrace and a kiss.

## SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

## I. LITURGICAL

## The Day of the Lord

## Sunday

1. The Day of the Lord—it has succeeded the Jewish Sabbath in its effects and in its significance, as we shall see.
2. Today the Gospel gives us an occasion to talk about keeping the Sunday holy, and therefore this scheme is intended to develop these points :
  - (a) something about the history of the Sunday observance;
  - (b) its characteristics,
  - (c) the way to keep it holy.

## A double memory

*The character of Sunday is that of a double memory:*

- (a) The main one is that of the Resurrection of the Lord:
  - i. It would appear that the Christians instituted it with this idea in mind. It was rather like a weekly remembrance of Easter.
  - ii. This appears to be the meaning of that passage of St Justin: On the Lord's Day we all meet together, both because this first day of the week was the day of creation, and also because Christ, our Saviour, rose from the dead on this day.
  - iii. For this reason it has always been a day of joy and all fasts, exterior penances, etc., which occur on this day are either suppressed or transferred to another occasion.
- (b) The second memory is closely united to the first:
  - i. Since baptism was administered on the vigil of Easter and since this new life is closely united with Easter, on Sunday we should remind ourselves of our baptism. It is the day on which we commemorate our rising to a new supernatural life.
  - ii. There is a vestige of this in the sprinkling with holy water before the principal Mass on Sunday.

## The two purposes of the Sunday

i. *Both can be deduced from the characteristics or memories which it holds for us:*

## (a) Adoration of God—what we call cult:

Man is bound to adore him and give thanks to him for all his benefits. The day which is most suited for this purpose is, obviously, that which commemorates our redemption; since it is as it were a summary of all the other graces we have received.

(b) Spiritual renewal:

Each Sunday must also be a day of spiritual revival; especially through prayer. Then by coming to church to hear the word of God for our instruction.

2. *Both purposes need rest:*

(a) From this comes the third aspect of the Sunday in relation to a Christian life; cult of God, spiritual renewal, rest.

(b) The first two are commanded by the Church ;

(c) the other is a necessary consequence of the others and is very useful in order to sanctify the Day of the Lord.

## Hearing Mass

1. *Mass is of obligation for all those who are over seven years of age:*

(a) there is no record of this law until the fifth century;

(b) but up to that time there was no need for a law, because the Christians had such an affection for the Mass, especially on Sundays, that they used to say: We cannot be without the holy sacrifice.

2. *The law:*

After the fifth century the law appears, and sanctions with it.

## No servile work

1. This came gradually, as Christianity spread through society.

2. Little by little, in the time of Constantine onwards, laws were made which regulated the work which could be done on the Sunday,

## Sunday in Christian life

1. It is not our intention at the moment to concentrate on the two great obligations already mentioned. It is enough to fix our attention on certain aspects of those obligations.

The Christian should make of the Sunday a day of real sanctification. It should be a day of assisting at the parish Mass and hearing the word of God.

2. The parish is the unit to which we belong and all should have a special devotion to the parish church.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### A: Our Father

#### The source of all paternity

I. According to the apostle, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the source of all fatherhood, because from him comes all fatherhood on earth or in heaven.



If fatherhood is the communication of life, the source of all life then God is our Father.

2. But there are titles and reasons why God is my Father, and which link me in a special way to his service.

### God our Father

There are three main titles of this paternity.

1. *Because of creation he is our Father:*

(a) He has not created us in the same way as other beings, of the vegetable or animal world;

(b) he made us to his image and likeness, something special which was not given to his other creatures.

2. *Because of the government which he exercises over us:*

(a) he does not govern us as creatures, but almost as over-lords of his creation.

(b) this is a singular act of providence on the part of God.

3. *Because of our adoption:*

(a) Here we enter into the supernatural order. He wished to give us his own life.

(b) He has made us his adopted sons with the right to his inheritance (Rom. 8.15).

### With an eternal love

1. *Two characteristics:*

To confirm fully the idea which we have begun to explain it is useful to keep in mind that there are two characteristics which belong to fatherhood on earth, to see how these are fulfilled in a more perfect way in God.

2. *These characteristics are love and the communication of life:*

(a) God loves us; not in any old way, but in a most special way:

i. Men love things which exist—God loves us, and therefore we exist.

ii. Before the creation of the world God had thought of us and chosen us (Eph. 1. 4).

(b) He gave us life:

i. On God depend both soul and body; he gave them to us, the soul by immediate creation, the body through our parents.

ii. From God comes all that we have, all good qualities, both spiritual and material.

iii. At every moment of our existence God gives us life and helps us in all our actions.

(c) He gave us supernatural life:

- i. This exceeds our natural life and without it we would have been perfect men ;
- ii. but God's love was so great that he wished us to share in his own life. When Adam lost this gift by sin God determined to restore it (John 3. 16-17).

## Our duty to God the Father

1. *The Fatherhood of God:*

From this idea comes an obligation on our part and a duty which we must accomplish. It is not merely something we have to do in justice; but something which we owe to him as to our Father—the duty of loyal sons.

2. *These duties can be reduced to:*

(a) Honour: we are bound to give God the honour he deserves:

This again consists of three elements :

- i. praise of God, not with the lips only, but from the heart;
- ii. purity of body—the temple of God (1 Cor. 6. 20);
- iii. love for our neighbour.

(b) imitation, as our Father:

This consists in three acts:

- i. love (Eph. 5. 1);
- ii. mercy (Luke 6. 16);
- iii. perfection (Matt. 5. 48).

(c) obedience:

- i. because he is God, the Lord of all;
- ii. because his own Son gave it to him;
- iii. because of the advantages for us.

(d) patience in trials:

If God tries us at times we must not rebel against his will, because he loves us. Our trials are not always punishments; sometimes there is another purpose behind them, of which we know nothing (Prov. 3. *ti-12*).

## Praise, reverence and serve the Father

1. This is our purpose on this earth, because he is our Father; therefore we have to praise him, serve him and reverence him.

2. In other words, God, our Father, loves us—and love is only repaid with love. Actions are a sign of love; therefore our unconditional service is the best way of showing our love for God.

### B: Christian fortitude

May he . . . strengthen you in his spirit (Eph. 3. 16)

1. For his faithful in Ephesus St Paul asks for strength in virtue.
2. Of fortitude—as of prudence—one must say that it is necessary for even' virtue. Virtue which is not strong ceases to be virtue.
3. On the other hand, it is a fact that there are many weak Christians, those who remain in grace and virtue while favourable winds are blowing, but at times of temptation, trials, hardships, etc., they weaken and sometimes fall.

### An example of strength

1. In the Old Testament we have the history<sup>l</sup> of Judith, which throws a good deal of light on the meaning of fortitude, before we attempt its definition.
2. She is the perfect image of a strong woman ; she did not hesitate, in order to save her people, to give up her fasts and sack-cloth; go down to the enemy's camp, and even into the very tent of their leader. When her chance came she cut off his head, having first cried out to God to give her strength.

### Fortitude

1. What is it? That which Judith did.
2. Leaving aside more theological concepts, we may say that it is that virtue which disposes our will to overcome and vanquish all fears.
  - (a) Strictly speaking, it has for its object the worst kind of fears, especially that of death ;
  - (b) but it can be extended to resistance against all our enemies of the soul, both interior and exterior, while by means of it we are urged to undertake those great struggles and heroic acts which virtue supposes.
3. What the martyrs and saints did implies heroic virtue.
4. We may say that fortitude is the virtue by means of which souls resist all those enemies who try to separate them from God and overcome all the difficulties which they come up against in their struggle to fulfil their duty to God.
  - (a) It is the spiritual energy of soul, necessary to fulfil the commands of God at every<sup>l</sup> moment and the duties of their state\_\_no matter at what cost.
  - (b) It is the temper of great souls, who prefer to die rather than sin.



## Two acts of fortitude

1. St Thomas assigns two acts to this virtue—attack, resist.

2. Of the two it is more difficult to resist than it is to attack.

(a) Because to resist implies an attack from without on the part of a strong enemy; while attack implies that we have the strength. It is always more difficult to resist a strong attack than it is to launch one;

(b) because the one who resists feels the present danger more than one who attacks. The latter sees dangers in the future more than in the present;

(c) resist implies a long struggle, while an attack can have success at any moment. It is always more difficult to remain quiet under attack than to launch out into violent movement.

## The need for strong men

1. Of the Christian of today it is required that he should be very strong in order to stand up against the materialism and sensuality which surround him; to fight against his lower inclinations.

(a) It is not the fortitude of the martyrs; but that which is needed each day to overcome our adversaries who go about like a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5. 8);

(b) fortitude in youth, to overcome evil customs and the dangers of the present civilization, bad books, pictures, television, etc.

2. This was practically the theme of a discourse of Pius XII to the Marian Congregation in 1945. In that speech he insists time and again on this virtue.

(a) In one passage he says:

What does life demand today, in its civil aspect? Men, real men... firmly tempered and disposed to action, who feel it a sacred duty not to be careless about anything which could lead to their perfection. . . . Men who, in the practice of their profession, flee from mediocrity and aim at that perfection which the labour of reconstruction demands from all.

(b) In yet another passage:

The present age demands Catholics without fear, for whom it is the most natural thing in the world to confess their faith, both in words and works, provided that the law of God and the true sentiments of Christian honour demand it. True, integral men, firm and intrepid.

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## C: Strength of the inward man, through the Spirit

Those who are fortified by the Spirit according  
to the interior man

1. The Spirit works in us in an interior way; he transforms us into Christ and in him he strengthens us. This is the thought of St Paul at the end of the third chapter, and the beginning of the fourth, in his second letter to the Corinthians.
2. Therefore, the petition he sends up to the Father on this occasion is a prayer that we may all be transformed through the spirit into men who are profoundly spiritual.
3. This prayer coincides, then, with the idea he expresses so frequently, above all in Galatians, that we should all walk in the spirit (5. 16).

## St Paul's thought about spirit and flesh

1. *Two powers are in man after sin; the spirit and the flesh:*

They are contradictory; one leads us to God, the other to sin.

(a) The impulses of nature and the impulses of the spirit are at war with one another; either is clean contrary to the other, and that is why you cannot do all that your will approves (Gal. 5. 17).

(b) Inwardly I applaud God's disposition, but I observe another disposition in my lower self, which raises war against the disposition of my conscience, and so I am handed over as a captive to that disposition towards sin which my lower self contains (Rom. 7.22-23).

(c) The Christian should walk according to the guidance of this Spirit, renouncing all the works of the flesh (Gal. 5. 16 ff.).

2. *The interior man:*

(a) According to this the strengthening of the spirit in the inward man means becoming more and more spiritual, less and less carnal;

(b) there are two means for accomplishing this; fidelity to the Spirit on the one hand, and mortification of the flesh on the other. The two must go together; through them the Pauline petition can be realized.

## The interior man, and fidelity to the Spirit

1. The great masters of the spiritual life teach us that fidelity to the Spirit and his inspirations is the only sure means to increase our spiritual life.

2. *It is useful in this respect to quote a passage from Abbot Mannion:*

(a) We must be watchful not to oppose the workings of this Divine Spirit by our levity, our voluntary dissipation, our carelessness, or wilful deliberate resistances, by an ill-regulated attachment

to our own judgement. . . . This action of the Holy Spirit is quite compatible with those imperfections which so often overtake us by surprise and which we regret, compatible too with our infirmities, human limitations, and temptations. . . .

(b) That which is incompatible with his action is calculated resistance to his inspirations. Why is this ? First because the Spirit proceeds from love, he is love itself; and yet although his love for us is incommensurable, and his action infinitely powerful, the Spirit absolutely respects our liberty and does not compel our will. We have the sad privilege of being able to resist him; but nothing thwarts love like obstinate resistance to its advances.

(c) Then, it is above all by his gifts that the Holy Spirit guides us in the path of holiness and makes us live as children of God ; now, in his gift it is the Holy Spirit who urges and determines the soul to act. . . . The soul's part is certainly not to remain entirely passive, but to be ready to receive divine inspiration, to listen to it, and be promptly faithful to it. Nothing blunts the action of the Holy Spirit in us like a rigid, unbending attitude in regard to those inward movements which bear us Godwards....

(d) And if these infidelities are multiplied, and become frequent and habitual, the Holy Spirit is silent; the soul thus given over to itself, without guide and inward support in the path of salvation and perfection, is very near to becoming the prey of the prince of darkness; it is the death of charity; *Spiritum nolite extinguere*. Extinguish not the Holy Spirit, for he is like a fire of love burning within our souls.

### Crucifying the works of the flesh

1. Together with this fidelity we need a constant overcoming of self or crucifixion of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5. 24).

It is not merely a matter of separating oneself from all sin or imperfection, but also from some things which are good and lawful. There are always two great temptations for all of us, no matter how much we may desire to serve God—pride and sensuality.

2. The Christian who avoids mortal sins and also does all that he can to avoid venial sins, but who gives way without scruple to his natural tendencies and to self-love or concupiscence will eventually put an obstacle in the way of the Spirit working within him.

3. The task of purifying these relics of concupiscence is one which must be undertaken as an indispensable condition for the work of the Spirit within us.

(a) There must be a renunciation of many good things, even when they do not imply movements of concupiscence or pride;

(b) positive work to destroy in ourselves the root of concupiscence ; this is the real reason for mortification of all kinds.



### Conclusion

The Christian who does all this may be assured that it will not be long before he is walking in the spirit, to the exclusion of the works of the flesh.

## HI. THE GOSPEL

### A: The Day of the Lord

The Gospel of today gives us an occasion for talking about the sanctification of the Sunday and Holidays of Obligation.

### The significance of the Sunday

1. In both the Old and the New Law one day of the week has received the name of the Day of the Lord.

2. But, even leaving aside the exaggeration of the Pharisees, the characteristics of this Lord's day are very different in the Old and in the New Law;

(a) they coincide in this, that it is a day when God should be specially honoured and adored ;

(b) but in the Old Law God seems very far off and even harsh. He was a God whose name could not be pronounced ; creator and judge, whose work of creation is solemnly celebrated by consecrating to him this one day of the week.

(c) In the New Testament we do not consecrate the last day of the week to God, as the last day of creation; but instead we dedicate Sunday to him, the first day, the day of victory over death and that of the consummation of the redemptive work. This day is:

- i. *holy*, because it is the day of the Lord ;
- joyful*, because we celebrate his greatest triumphs.

### Its importance

i. *This is shown by:*

(a) The fact of its divine institution (Ex. 20. 8; 31. 14);

(b) the confirmation of this by the Church :

i. she observed it from the beginning, probably from apostolic times ;

ii. the severity of the Church's laws, punishing any fault with regard to this observance with eternal death.

(c) Reason also shows us this :

Unless we had a day dedicated to God our laziness would allow us to go many months without giving him a thought.

2. *God is the Lord of our life:*

(a) Just as before people offered him the tithes and first fruits, now substituted for alms, etc.; so we must offer him at least the gift of our time;

(b) he and the Church have decided that it shall be one day out of our week.

The way to make the Sunday holy

1. Since this is the Lord's Day it is only right that it should be sanctified and that this should be its main purpose.

2. This sanctification has a negative element, which consists in resting from servile works; not so much to give some rest to the body, but mainly to give us time for the service of God.

3. The positive element is the cult we offer to God on this day.

(a) First of all sacrifice:

i. the Jews were bound to offer these sacrifices at least once a year—and they were but shadows of the future;

ii. we have to come together once a week to repeat the sacrifice of the Cross. Christ has made it very easy for us.

(b) Secondly those devotions which most conduce to our salvation and sanctification:

i. these works do not bind under sin, because the Church did not want to put that obligation on us, but they clearly enter into the end and spirit of the law;

ii. one of the main things we should do is listen to a sermon.

(c) There should be no need to mention charity under all its aspects, both spiritual and material.

How the Sunday can be profaned

1. *By missing Mass or doing servile work.*

2. *But there are other ways:*

(a) by making this, the Lord's day, a day dedicated to sin, the world, flesh and the devil;

(b) occasions of sin;

(c) family life and recreation should be the ideal.

Benefits of making the Sunday holy

i. Earthly, material benefits were promised in the Old Testament (Isaias 26. 15). It is well known that, where the Old Testament promised material rewards or punishments, the New Law has changed them into spiritual ones.

2. If Christ promised that his Father would hear any prayer offered by two or three united together in his name:

(a) What will the Mass not do, in which the whole parish is united, where the sacrifice of Christ is repeated and offered for all?

(b) God will be angry with those who do not unite their efforts to those of the rest of the faithful.

3. *The family that prays together stays together:*

(a) What a strong bond of union between husband and wife, who go to Mass together, that God may bless them whom one day he blessed in matrimony;

(b) the great influence it has on the conduct of them both—and the family.

## B: The Lord's Day and Man's Day

### Sunday is the Day of the Lord

1. *All our days belong to God:*

He is the author and the preserver of them all.

(a) Each day we must give to God the tribute of our homage, adoration and love for all that we have and are; each day we should ask his help, for every day he is our God, to whom we owe so much and from whom we need help.

(b) Since we are condemned to work because of sin and this work distracts us from God by applying all our energies to created things, God has chosen one day out of the week which is reserved for him.

(c) It is right that man should dedicate this one day to God, who could have demanded the same cult every day, with justice.

2. *The law:*

(a) In the Old Testament God laid it down that the sabbath should be this day of rest, reserved to himself to be made holy (Ex. 20. 8).

(b) In the New Testament the Day of the Lord is the first day of the week—Sunday.

3. *Sunday is the day of the Trinity:*

(a) in honour of the Father, who began the work of creation on this day;

(b) of the Son, who rose again from the dead on the first day of the week;

(c) of the Holy Spirit who descended in a visible form on Sunday—Pentecost, to give life to the Church—and to us.

4. *The law of the Church:*

(a) It is necessary to dedicate this day to God with the following acts:



(b) by hearing Mass. This is the principal act of Christian worship, and it is an obligation binding under grave sin;

(c) but not merely this half hour or so of the Mass should be dedicated to God on Sunday; the whole day should be one of sanctification;

i. we can assist at the evening devotions;

ii. learn something about our faith either from sermons or readings.

(d) the practice of works of charity is a good way to make sure that we sanctify the day of the Lord.

### It is also man's day

#### 1. *Every day is also man's day:*

Because all creatures have been made for man, to help him to attain his end.

(a) The rest of the week man concentrates his main efforts on the things around him, his work, gaining his daily bread ;

(b) the Lord has willed it that Sunday should be, not merely his day, but also a day of rest for man—as in heaven he will one day share his glory with us, so now he shares his day.

#### 2. *Day of the soul:*

Because it is a day of intense communication with God :

(a) by means of that supreme act of adoration, the Mass ;

(b) more perfect still if during it we go to communion ;

(c) communication by prayer;

(d) communication by listening to the word of God in sermons or readings;

(e) because we can share in the active work of the apostolate, catechism instructions, etc.

#### 3. *Day of the body:*

(a) No one loves work so much as God ; he is ceaseless in his own labours; he placed man in paradise to work in it, and after sin this work became our expiation for sin. Incarnate, he dedicated himself to labour.

(b) God himself, through Moses, ordered the sabbath to be kept as a day of rest, and through the Church, he ordered the same on Sundays for Christians ;

(c) this is a need imposed by nature and God has accommodated his law to it by this Sunday rest;

(d) the day of the body, which should not give itself over to excess in eating or drinking on that day, or to any sin.

#### 4. *Day of the family:*

(a) for mutual affection and understanding;

(b) family recreation and union.

### C: Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?

#### The argument of Christ

1. Christ voluntarily, with premeditation and we might also say in a provocative way, violated the law of the sabbath as the Jews understood it—and he did this at least six times (cf. next scheme).

2. *He entered on a constant war on this point with the Pharisees:*

(a) He does not do it solely for the Pharisees; but mainly thinking about us;

(b) he did not wish us to confuse the letter of the law with the spirit; we must not manufacture for ourselves a religion which is against the natural law, or one in which the word of God is interpreted in such a way that it leaves little or no room for mercy.

#### The arguments of Jesus

1. *Directly against the Scribes and Pharisees:*

You are hypocrites, you are not sincere, he tells them, time and again.

(a) He was teaching in the synagogue and a poor woman entered who had been ill a long time, and was so bowed down that she could not look up. Jesus cured her although it was a sabbath.

(b) The chief of the synagogue, afraid to tackle Jesus personally, tells the people that there are six other days in the week when they can come and ask for cures.

(c) Jesus calls them hypocrites and points out that they will untie an ox or an ass, or help their animals out of a pit on the sabbath, but they will not allow him to cure one human being who is far -worse off than these animals.

(d) His adversaries were confounded; the people applauded.

2. *You do not understand the law:*

There were some things which the law permitted on the sabbath—such as the offering of sacrifices (Num. 28. 9).

3. *The spirit is above the letter:*

(a) Even in the old law, which also had its spirit of mercy: I will have mercy rather than sacrifice (Osee 6. 6).

(b) Jesus reminded the Pharisees of these words when they accused the disciples because they plucked the ears of corn on the sabbath (Matt. 12. 2).

(c) If the law permits the priests to violate the sabbath in the temple without being guilty of any offence, how much more will it allow me to do works of mere)', which are worth more in sight than any sacrifice!

## SERMON SCHEMES

### 4. *The natural law:*

(a) There is a text concerning this in the same chapter 12 of the Gospel of St Matthew. The positive law must always be interpreted according to the natural law and the rights which that law gives to every man.

(b) My disciples took the ears of corn and ate them because they were hungry; they are within their rights; he then gives them the example of what David did and his men, how they ate the loaves of proposition when they were hungry, a thing unlawful for any but the priests.

### 5. *Man is not made for the sabbath—but the sabbath was made for man :*

(a) There can be no opposition between the natural and the divine positive law; both came from one and the same God. Both were given for man's benefit;

(b) the sabbath was made for the benefit of man, so that he could rest and so that he could have a little more time to apply his mind to the things which concern his eternal salvation.

i. *this is the basis of Jesus' argument.* The sabbath has been made for man ; therefore, if on any occasion it is a hindrance rather than a help it must be abandoned.

ii. for this reason I allow my disciples to do this work of plucking the ears of corn and eating them on that day. The sabbath may perish before man.

### 6. *I am the Lord of the sabbath:*

The Lord proclaims himself the author of all law and all justice, as God made man (Mark 2. 28).

### 7. *The most profound theological reason:*

As happens so frequently, we find it in St John :

(a) Christ healed the sick man by the side of the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath, and the Jews persecuted him for it (John 5. 16).

(b) He gives then this supreme reason, which they did not understand : My father has never ceased working, and I too must be at work.

(c) Not merely did they not understand but his words made them all the more anxious to kill him: This made the Jews more determined than ever to make away with him, that he not only broke the sabbath, but spoke of God as his own Father.

## Substance of the doctrine

i. The examples, actions and words of the Saviour teach the people more about the substance of Christian doctrine than all abstract arguments could do.



2. The doctrine which follows from these episodes in the life of Christ is clear, yet there have been times when it has not been understood.

A religion of formulas, of small precepts rigidly interpreted, the minor details of liturgical worship, details of the law—the letter of the law, understood in such a literal fashion that it becomes absurd, can overcome and smother the spirit of the law' and the Gospel, which is mercy and charity.

3. This shows us the importance of preaching the authentic Gospel and of not reducing it to four or five points, or to some precepts which are preached to the exclusion of others, when Christ's mind is that he is more interested in mutual love and charity' than in anything else.

### D: The supreme reason

#### Six violations of the sabbath

##### 1. *Recorded incidents:*

As we said in the last scheme, there are at least six recorded incidents when Christ violated the sabbath publicly:

- (a) the apostles and the ears of corn (Matt. 12. 1);
- (b) the cure of the man with the withered hand (Luke 6. 6-11);
- (c) the cure of the woman eighteen years under the chains of her infirmity (Luke 13. 11-12);
- (d) the cure of the man with dropsy (Luke 14. 1-6);
- (e) cure of the man at the pool (John 5. 1-9);
- (f) cure of the man blind from birth (John 9. 1-8).

##### 2. *The reason given by Jesus:*

(a) first case: the sabbath was made for man—I will have mercy, not sacrifice.

(b) second, third and fourth cases: you untie an ox or ass;

(c) fifth and sixth cases: these two lift the whole thing on to a higher spiritual plane. St John opens up two questions, that of the spiritual sabbath and that of the divinity of our Lord.

### The divinity of our Lord

##### 1. *The man who was blind from birth:*

(a) In this episode the Gospel of St John reveals to us that sometimes there is a connection between sin and illness and at other times there is not (John 9. 2-3).

(b) In the case of the man at the pool there was a connection (John 5. 14).

2. *Spiritual cure:*

In both cases Jesus takes the cure from the material sphere to the spiritual. Together with their bodily cure Christ has given them both intellectual light so that they may see, i.e. he has given them faith.

- i. in the case of the man born blind (John 9. 35-38);
- ii. in the case of the man at the pool : Sin no more, our Lord said to him; therefore he had brought him back to the life of grace.

3. *The supreme reason:*

(a) In both cases Christ offers the supreme reason why he cures on the sabbath ; the Jews had interpreted it in a materialistic, brutal, stupid manner; Christ opens up for them all the joy and glory of the sabbath, with its eternal perspectives.

(b) He is God, and therefore not only may but must work on the sabbath (John 5. 17).

(c) Christ, as God, must be present in all his works, otherwise they fall into nothing—he keeps his works in being all the time, even on the sabbath !

Consequences of this divinity

1. *The theology:*

In continuation, in chapter 5, we find it is profound theology which St John unfolds for us, taking as the starting point the miracle.

2. *We may quote some of the main points he makes:*

(a) The Son cannot do anything at his own pleasure, he can only do what he sees his Father doing . . . as the Father works on the sabbath, so does the Son.

(b) Just as the Father bids the dead rise up and gives them life, so the Son gives life to whomsoever he will (verse 21), an allusion to the spiritual life which he gives to all who come to him.

(c) The life which the Son gives is that of faith : The man who listens to my words, and puts his trust in him who sent me, enjoys eternal life (v. 24).

(d) He gave this to the man at the pool just as he did the one who was born blind. Believe me, the time is coming, nay, has already come, when the dead will listen to the voice of the Son of God, and those who listen to it will live (v. 25).

The eternal sabbath

1. *There is a reference to this which should not be forgotten:*

Christ said to the Pharisees: Do not be surprised at that; the time is coming, when all those who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out of them; those whose actions have been

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good, rising to new life; and those whose doings have been evil, rising to meet their sentence (w. 28-29).

2. *There is abundant material here for sermons:*

(a) In St Augustine there are frequent references to the relation between the earthly Sunday and the eternal. This is but a continuation of the former.

(b) The last chapter of the *City of God* sums it all up.

### E: The spirit of the sabbath in St Augustine

#### His exposition of it

1. He penetrates into the very spirit of the sabbath according to the mind of God, giving an interpretation which is poles apart from that of the Jews. They were more concerned with the letter; Augustine with the spirit.

2. He refers especially to the sabbath in the spiritual order; it is the day of spiritual rest, the day of God, who is a Spirit. It is an anticipation on earth of the eternal rest in heaven.

3. We talk about keeping the Sunday holy, he says, because here is the Spirit of God. See what kind of holiday or rest he asks of us. On whom, says Isaias, will the Spirit of God rest? On the humble, the meek, those who fear my words (Isaias 61. 1).

#### Third precept and third plague

##### I. *He loves to compare the third precept of the law with the third plague on Egypt:*

(a) You cannot rest, he says, because of your inner unrest; you cannot see because you are blinded by the corruption of your vain quarrels. You wish to see that which you cannot see.

(b) The mosquitoes were born of the mud in the land of Egypt (Ex. 8. 17). They are like small flies, very active and annoying, which attack your eyes and do not allow you any rest, because as soon as you frighten them away they return once more to plague you. Thus is your poor heart, agitated and tired from the vain fantasies of your contrary and warring sentiments. Keep the law; keep the sabbath in the spiritual sense.

##### 2. *Those who do not rest:*

You are told to keep the sabbath, but understand that spiritually, not as the Jews understood it and spent the day in idleness. It would have been better for them to do something in their fields rather than spend the time in idle discussions, while their women do nothing but look out from their balconies, instead of spinning yarn. °



## Servile works

1. *The law forbade the Jews to do servile work on the sabbath:*

(a) We must distinguish carefully between work which is free and that which is servile. The difference lies in the motive; if the motive is an interior one then the work is free; if it is exterior, the work is servile. When we work because we wish to do so the work is free; when we are forced to work it is servile.

(b) Let us save our true liberty on the sabbath and cast far from us all yokes of slavery.

2. *St Augustine says:*

Let us observe the sabbath in a spiritual manner. Let us do no servile work on the sabbath. The Jews did not understand the meaning of these words. The most servile of all works which we can do on the sabbath is sin. Let the Jew, with all his lack of understanding, hear the words of Jesus: He who does sin is the slave of sin.

Whatever you do in this world, do it with the idea of gaining the future rest. For the love of this world men work eagerly in all kinds of business. But do you work in all kinds of good actions, not for the love of this world, but to merit eternal life, the eternal rest which has been promised to you.

## The contrast

We must look for the true spirit of the Gospel in the Fathers of the Church; there is no more sure guide.

1. For this reason we have studied briefly the idea of the Sunday rest in St Augustine, the chief of the Latin Fathers.

2. We do not pretend that all our people can be brought up at once in this spirit; if the majority hear Mass, rest from servile works and do not sin on the Lord's Day that is the most we can expect.

3. But for priests and religious there is more to the Sunday than that, and if they observe the Lord's Day in a true spirit of faith they will, by their example, draw some souls after them.

## F: The sabbath in St Thomas

The former scheme dealt with the doctrine of St Augustine; in this one we shall limit ourselves to that of St Thomas. We shall see how both coincide.

## A moral precept

I. St Thomas points out that the Sunday includes a moral, ceremonial and spiritual precept.

2. *A moral precept in so far as:*

- (a) man must dedicate part of his life to divine things;
- (b) also Sunday may be considered as a day when man must avoid sin, in which case it comes under a general moral precept—as we have seen from St Augustine.

### Ceremonial precept

- 1. As a reminder and sign of the creation of the world.
- 2. As a figure of the burial of Christ in the tomb.
- 3. As it reminds us of the eternal rest which will one day be ours.

### Servile works

*There is a three-fold servitude:*

- (a) That of man to sin (John 8. 34) and in this sense all sin is a servile work;
- (b) of man to man; when a man puts his bodily service at the disposition of the will of another;
- (c) the servitude of the sons of God; in this sense it is a work of adoration of God, as is everything else that pertains to his service.

### Forbidden works

- 1. It is the first two of the three already mentioned which are forbidden by God;
  - (a) the first always, and obviously, because of the moral concept of Sunday;
  - (b) the second because it is real slavery, not proper to free men. The use of our higher powers is allowed, because that is proper to free men.
- 2. The third is not merely not forbidden, but it is also commanded, as something proper to the concept of Sunday, so that man may fulfil his obligations towards God.
  - (a) To serve God is liberty;
  - (b) that is why, in the Old Law, the priests worked on the sabbath.
- 3. St Thomas makes his own the text of Augustine already quoted in which he says that it is better to work in the fields on a Sunday than idle away one's time in useless or harmful diversions; while for women it would be more profitable to spin than to dance.

### Sabbath and Sunday

- i. Sunday has taken the place of the sabbath in the Old Law both by command of the Church and the custom of Christian peoples.

2. Sunday has not the figurative value that the sabbath had, and therefore its precepts are not so severe with regard to servile work as they were in the Old Law. More things are allowed and many more can be permitted by a dispensation.

### Conclusion

1. The whole doctrine of the third commandment is extremely valuable, because it concerns directly the honour and glory of God and also the constitution of the Church.

2. It is a social precept, since the faithful gather together in church to praise God and the whole of social life takes on a new character, unlike that of ordinary working days. Men take off their working clothes and put on others—an external symbol of the importance of this day. All take on the aspect of sons of God reunited to love and serve him.

3. To fit in with all this the priests must do their best to attract their people to the service of God :

- (a) by a correct rendering of the liturgical part of the function;
- (b) popular devotions and singing;
- (c) a well prepared sermon.

### G: Fraternal correction

Today's Gospel has two parts; the first concerned with the miracle, the other with fraternal correction.

#### How this correction should be given

1. *With charity—the first and most important requisite:*

- (a) Correction comes from charity and must be a fruit of it;
- (b) that correction is not good which tends to humiliate the one corrected ;
- (c) sometimes it is self-love and not the love of our neighbour which prompts it;
- (d) to know if it is an act of charity we must see if it is done with anger or indignation—if so, then it is not charitable or good.

2. *With humility:*

- (a) The one who corrects also has his faults, perhaps worse ones than those which he is correcting;
- (b) this will give him dominion over his anger and indignation and will give gentle kindness to his words;
- (c) it will also help him to correct his own defects and so help his neighbour more by example than by his words.

3. *With respect:*

The fact that a man commits a fault does not mean that he loses our respect or the right to it.



4. *Correction without excess is an important thing:*

(a) It is difficult; quite often the one who corrects another is not patient enough to wait for a gradual correction of the fault concerned;

(b) it is proper to a delicate spirit to see when his words are having effect—then there is no need to say more.

5. *With understanding:*

(a) See if the fault is more important in our eyes than it was in the eyes of our neighbour when he committed it;

(b) remember that he was blinded by passion or temptation;

(c) remember that there is a lot of good in all men.

6. *At the right moment:*

(a) Its efficacy will depend very much on this factor;

(b) the first moment of a fall is not usually a good one;

(c) if the one who corrects has suffered from the fault of another he should be careful to let such things pass for a time before correcting his neighbour; otherwise self is sure to enter in;

(d) charity seeks privacy in correction, doing the least harm possible.

How it should be received

I. *With humility:*

(a) This is difficult because when corrected we feel hurt, we see all the defects of the one who corrects us, we try to justify ourselves, we think that we are being judged only by the evil we do and not for our good qualities as well;

(b) but it will do us good if we take it with humility;

(c) the first manifestation of this humility is the silence with which we receive the correction; not judging it yet, either for or against; just take it and think about it.

2. *With gratitude:*

(a) To God who has sent us a good angel;

(b) to the one who does it—it is a work of mercy;

(c) the best way of giving thanks to both God and man is to correct the fault which has been pointed out to us.

H: Observing Christ

Two classes of people who watch him

i. *Those who do it out of malice:*

(a) against Christ himself:

Like the scribes and Pharisees mentioned so often in the Gospels; some out of pure curiosity, others from real malice.

(b) against his Church:

i. this has been a fact from the early ages;

ii. false accusations against the faith and practice of Christians led to many being killed;

iii. in all her history she has been watched with malice by her enemies, the difference between her teaching and the lives of so many of her faithful has been pointed out as a stain on her character;

iv. but she will still be the Church of Christ, in spite of the difficulties she has so often with the human element within her.

(c) against individuals:

i. all Catholics are the object of this kind of observation, like himself;

ii. he who returns to the Church after a life of sin is watched carefully by those who still remain afar off;

iii. so is the one who tries all the time to live a life of virtue;

iv. especially priests and religious.

2. *It is a foul vice:*

(a) because it comes from malice and pride;

(b) it is directly opposed to charity;

(c) and also against justice, because it violates the respect due to the liberty of the human person.

3. *Christ overcame it:*

(a) he answered them—sometimes before they mentioned their criticisms in words;

(b) he confounded them and put them to shame—the example of the ass and the ox ;

(c) he continues to overcome them in the person of his Church ;

i. every day the truth becomes clearer;

ii. her sanctity more apparent, in spite of the human faults of so many of her members;

iv. even heresy only helps to make the truth shine with greater brilliance.

### Those who watch in order to learn

1. *There were some like this who watched Jesus:*

(a) The simple people;

i. to hear his teaching, admire his example and follow him with enthusiasm;

ii. to speak in admiration of him, as in the case of the simple woman who admired his conduct in the face of his enemies (Luke 11. 27);

iii. to bear him in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem (Matt. 21. 8-10);

(b) his disciples, who tried to follow his teachings in their lives;

(c) the twelve apostles, more intimate with him than the rest;

(d) Mary, his Mother.

2. *They also look on the Church, his mystical Body, with veneration and love:*

- (a) the simple faithful, who go to church to hear the truth ;
- (b) those in trouble, in sorrow or pain, who look to her to give them strength;
- (c) sinners who repent and who come to church to receive the embrace of pardon ;
- (d) chosen souls, continually looking at Christ to learn more and more from him;
- (e) apostolic souls who feel the need to do something in return for all that Jesus has done for them ;
- (f) all the souls of those who are filled with the true spirit of faith know how to understand that human faults are bound to creep in, but that it does not really matter.

### I: Observing Christ, our model

He wishes to be observed in this way

1. It is the will of Christ that we should take him for our model (John 13. 15) and it is also the will of his and our Father in Heaven (Matt. 3.17).
2. The whole of the Christian life is summed up by Paul: Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ (1 Cor. 4. 16).

### The qualities of our model

1. *He is perfect:*

This is admitted even by those who deny his divinity ;

- (a) in his horror for sin;
- (b) his practice of all the virtues in an heroic degree ;
- (c) his love for the Father;
- (d) his charity and mercy;
- (e) his perfect denial of self in order to love and serve others.

2. *He can be imitated:*

(a) because he took on himself all our human miseries and weakness, he was like us in all things except sin;

(b) thus :

- i. he lives a hidden life of poverty and work;
- ii. a public life of great hardship, with both successes and failure ; sorrows and joys ;
- iii. he suffered, as no one else has ever had to suffer—all kinds of sufferings.

3. *He is full of attraction for us:*

(a) He said so himself, once he was lifted up he would draw all men to him (John 12. 32);



(b) this has been fulfilled as a perpetual miracle throughout history in an endless series of lovers of the cross.

i. Paul (1 Cor. 2. 2);

ii. the other apostles who were in joy at the thought of being counted worthy to suffer something for his sake (Acts 5. 41);

iii. Andrew, embracing the cross;

iv. all souls who have received the cross with joy throughout the ages and in whatever form it is presented to them.

4. *His example is efficacious:*

(a) with the example he offers us the grace to accept it;

(b) he merited for us the grace to imitate him in his virtues;

(c) especially in his passion and death; there he won for us abundant grace to imitate him in all things.

## J: Man and animals

### Two extremes

1. The Gospel, so scanty when it comes to useless details, still allows us a glimpse now and then of the delicate sentiments of Christ.

(a) On this occasion he is not defending animals, merely pointing out the contrast between the conduct of the Pharisees towards them and towards their fellow men.

(b) On another occasion, when talking about divine providence, he will mention the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

2. There are two extremes we have to lament in man's treatment of the animals God has given into his care, a sickly sentimentality on the one hand and an excess of cruelty on the other.

### Excessive sentimentalism

We see this only too often :

(a) people who leave all their money to homes, etc., for animals when there are the poor of the whole world waiting for their help ;

(b) others who spend as much on feeding an animal as would feed a child of a poor family;

(c) others who refuse to allow most valuable experiments on animals, capable of saving millions of lives.

### Some basic principles regarding animals

1. *All that exists is God's work and musty therefore, be respected.*

2. *All that has been created has been made for man's use:*

(a) To make an animal into an end in itself instead of a means is to attempt to change the natural order of things;

(b) man may dispose of the animals for his needs, without any restriction, just as he disposes of a mineral.

3. *To be avoided:*

iMoral evil, and physical evil when possible, and when it is not convenient for other purposes which are laudable.

(a) To destroy life for the sake of doing so is evil;

(b) physical pain in animals should be avoided, especially any torture of an animal for diversion or caprice ;

(c) but it is not wrong to use animals for experimental purposes, provided the experiments are justified, with reasonable chance of success in the end and care is taken to avoid unnecessary pain.

4. A true Christian should be sufficiently sensitive to rejoice in the beauty, fidelity, and love (if we may call it that) of the animals for man, avoiding causing them any harm where possible.

All these thoughts appear in some form in the Scriptures

1. They are all God's creatures, he dresses them and feeds them (Matt. 6. 26).

2. But he created them for our use (Gen. 9. 3).

3. We are worth more than they are (Matt. 6. 26).

4. He has reflected in their instincts many of the virtues which we ought to possess :

(a) the ant (Prov. 6. 6);

(b) the wisdom of the serpent and the simplicity of doves (Matt. 10.16).

5. Harshness to animals, and positive cruelty especially, lead to lack of sensitivity in man (Prov. 12. 10).

## K: Ambition

### The first seats at the table

1. The scene is laid for us in today's Gospel, and Christ's comments to those whom he saw trying their best to occupy the first places of honour at the table to which he was invited are also addressed to us.

2. They give us an opportunity of thinking about ambition in all its forms.

### Ambition

*Ah inordinate love of and desire for honours:*

(a) Honour and fame are almost necessities of human nature;

(b) we wish others to think well of us, to honour us ;

(c) it horrifies us to think that others may form a poor idea of us and of our qualities ;

(d) riches and honour are the two great stimulants of all human activity.

## Magnanimity

1. For the pagans it was a great, if not the greatest, virtue. It supposes a search for glory and honour.
2. In Christians too it is laudable, as a virtue.
3. What is the meaning of this virtue for a Christian ?
4. St Thomas gives us the answer when he says that magnanimity seeks great honours, not immediately, but through hope. It is the same as that phrase of Augustine, Our life now is one of hope, later it will be one of glory.

The Christian should seek truly great honours, those which are eternal, not passing things; and this honour he should now possess in hope.

## The way to honours

### 1. *The key:*

Here is the key to the meaning of our Lord's words: He that humbles himself shall be exalted.

(a) The greatest future honour will be given to the one who humbles himself here below (Phil. 2. 8);

(b) Christ, who was God, reached the very depths of humiliation on earth, for which reason the Father exalted him, with a name beyond any other, for all eternity.

### 2. *An example—that of St Paul:*

(a) He aimed very high, wishing to submit all men's minds to his teaching, touch all their hearts; he is greater than those who attack or contradict him; greater than Moses; has earned more fruit than the other apostles, etc., etc.

(b) But none of this leads him to glory in himself or be vain; instead he has one glory, Christ, and he is satisfied to wait until God will give him the final victory and his reward for eternity.

3. The Gospel does not ask of us that we should be timid, cowards, mediocre. It demands from us humility, that we shall flee from worldly honours and seek the true honour, which comes from God as a reward for virtue. True magnanimity is impossible without true humility. That is why they go hand in hand.

## L: Pride, an anti-social vice

### The Lord gives us a lesson against pride

1. We see also how the Pharisees, through their pride, neither heed the teachings of Christ nor allow him to heal the poor man.
2. On many occasions we have spoken about this vice; now we shall consider it in its social aspects.



### The essential anti-social nature of pride

#### 1. *Its essence:*

(a) Man naturally loves himself; otherwise he would no longer wish to live or to perfect himself;

(b) but pride puts this natural love into disorder, out of step with the rest of men. The proud man loves himself without any thought of others, except how he can use them.

#### 2. *Its history:*

(a) The first sin of pride was that of Satan; this brought with it later the fall of Adam.

(b) Just as a great building crashes to the ground and brings other smaller ones with it if it should chance to fall on them, so that proud spirit fell on us and accomplished our ruin. And in falling on us he somehow communicated to us a movement similar to that which provoked his fall (Bossuet).

#### 3. *Its consequences:*

(a) it begins by separating us from God;

(b) from its essence and origin comes its anti-social aspect;

i. we are not thinking only of the loss of grace, which is obvious, because God resists the proud (James 4. 6), but of the fact that, by its very nature, it separates man from God; the proud man sets himself up as his own last end.

ii. once a man prescinds from God in this fashion he knows no brake and admits of no guidance whatever. There is no need to insist on the social and international consequences of such a thing.

(c) Pride makes man the centre of the world. All idea of senice disappears and with it the **social value** of the proud man.

(d) Consequences of pride are passions, injustice of all kinds—every' sin, in fact.

### Pride the ruin of all the social elements

#### 1. *Science:*

(a) True science cannot be proud; it must admit God exists and also its own limitations;

(b) a scientist who is proud soon thinks that he knows everything and is capable of giving his opinion about anything.

#### 2. *Art:*

The proud man admits no rules of thought—and therefore no rules for the expression of thoughts.

#### 3. *Authority:*

(a) It is impossible to govern with pride, whether it be the family, state or municipalities.

(b) Where all think they are superior no one will obey and law is impossible.

(c) Rebellion takes the place of law.

4. *Material progress:*

(a) The new god of today ; but material progress in pride is a god that devours its sons.

(b) We live amidst the fear of a world-wide catastrophe, which has been brought on us by pride and by too much attention to material progress instead of to the spiritual. May God give us grace to be humble in time.

*Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost*

THE GREATEST AND THE FIRST  
COMMANDMENT

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Ephesians 4. 1-6

Gospel: Matthew 22. 34-46  
(Cf. Luke 20. 41-44; Mark 12. 28-37)

Texts related to this passage of the Gospels

(Many of the texts concerning charin' have already been quoted elsewhere in this work;\* there is no need to repeat them. We shall limit ourselves to those which have not already been mentioned and to other texts related to this passage in some definite way.)

1. *God must be loved above all things:*

What return, then, Israel, does the Lord thy God ask of thee? This, that thou shouldst fear the Lord thy God, and follow the path he chooses for thee, and love him, and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul, and keep those divine commandments and observances I enjoin on thee this day, as the conditions of thy happiness. Deut. 10.12-13. *GX. ibid.* 11.22.

He will rid thy heart and the hearts of thy children of all defilement, and thou wilt find life in loving the Lord thy God, heart and soul. *Ibid.* 30.6.

Yet always keeping carefully in mind, and carrying out in act, the terms of that law which the Lord's servant Moses enjoined on you. You must still love the Lord your God, and follow the paths he has chosen, obeying his commandments, keeping close to him, and offering him the service of your heart and soul. Josue 22. 5.

And he answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with the love of thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and thy whole strength, and thy whole mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. Luke 10. 27.

Nor does this hope delude us; the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received. Rom. 5. 5.

Meanwhile we are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his desisjt. Rom. 8. 28.

That love resides, not in our shewing any love for God, but in his

\* See 5th, 12th and 21st Sundays after Pentecost.



shewing love for us first, when he sent out his Son to be an atone-  
ment for our sins. Beloved, if God has shewn such love to us, we  
too must love one another. 1 John 4. 10-11.

2. *Christ is the promised Messias:*

I will raise up for them a prophet like thyself, one of their own  
race, entrusting my own message to his lips, so that he may instruct  
them at my bidding. Deut. 18.18.

Sign you ask none, but sign the Lord will give you. Maid shall be  
with child and shall bear a son, that shall be called Emmanuel.  
Isaias 7. 14.

From the stock of Jesse a scion shall burgeon yet; out of his roots  
a flower shall spring. One shall be born, on whom the spirit of the  
Lord will rest . . . word of him shall smite the earth like a rod,  
breath of him shall destroy the ill-doer; love of right shall be the  
baldric he wears, faithfulness the strength that girds him. Isaias  
n. 2-5.

For our sakes a child is born, to our race a son is given, whose  
shoulder will bear the sceptre of princely power. What name shall  
be given him ? Peerless among counsellors, the mighty God, Father  
of the world to come, the Prince of peace. Ever wider shall his  
dominion spread, endlessly at peace; he will sit on David's kingly  
throne, to give it lasting foundations of justice and right; so tenderly  
he loves us, the Lord of hosts. Isaias 9. 6-7.

I have appointed thee to be the light of the Gentiles, in thee I will  
send out my salvation to the furthest corners of the earth. Isaias 49. 6.

Nay, here is one despised, left out of all human reckoning; bowed  
with misery, and no stranger to weakness ; how should we recognize  
that face ? How should we take any account of him, a man so despised ?  
Our weakness, and it was he who carried the weight of it, our  
miseries, and it was he who bore them. A leper, so we thought of  
him, a man God had smitten and brought low; and all the while it  
was for our sins he was wounded, it was guilt of ours crushed him  
down; on him the punishment fell that brought us peace, by his  
bruises we were healed. Isaias 53. 3-5.

Rise up, Jerusalem, and shine forth; thy dawn has come, breaks  
the glory of the Lord upon thee! Isaias 60. 1.

They shall have one king over them, a shepherd to tend them all,  
my servant, David; my will they shall follow, my commands  
remember and obey. Ezcch. 37. 24.

Then I saw in my dream how one came riding on the clouds of  
heaven, that was yet a son of man; came to where the Judge sat,  
crowned with age, and was ushered into his presence. With that,  
power was given him, and glory, and sovereignty; obey him all must,  
men of every race and tribe and tongue; such a reign as his lasts for  
ever, such power as his the ages cannot diminish. Dan. 7. 13-14.

b:

1.

1.

It is ordained that this people of thine, that holy city of thine, should wait seventy' weeks before guilt is done away, sin ended^ wrong righted; before God's everlasting favour is restored, and the visions and the prophecies come true, and he who is all holiness receives his anointing. Be assured of this and mark it well; a period of seven weeks must go by, and another period of sixty-two weeks, between the order to rebuild Jerusalem and the coming of the Christ to be your leader. Street and wall will be built again, though in a time of distress; and then sixty-two weeks must pass before the Christ is done to death; the people will disown him and have none of him. Dan. 9. 24-26.

Bethlehem-Ephrata! Least do they reckon thee among all the clans of Juda? Nay, it is from thee I look to find a prince that shall rule over Israel. Whence comes he? From the first beginning, from ages untold! Mich. 5. 2.

Sion, poor maid, break out into songs of rejoicing; I am on my way, coming to dwell in the midst of thee, the Lord says. Zach. 2.10.

Glad news for thee, widowed Sion; *cry* out for happiness, Jerusalem forlorn! See where thy king comes to greet thee, a trusty deliverer; see how lowly he rides; mounted on an ass, patient colt of patient dam! Zach. 9. 9.

See where I am sending an angel of mine, to make the way ready for my coming! All at once the Lord will visit his temple; that Lord so longed for, welcome herald of a divine covenant. Mai. 3. 1.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

### I. LITURGICAL

#### I. *The Ember Days:*

The Missal fixes the fasts called Ember Days after the Seventeenth Sunday, although they do not always coincide with that Sunday, but occur in the third week of September. On this Sunday St Leo announced to the people: The fourth and sixth days of this week we fast, and on the Saturday we celebrate the vigil in St Peter's. It will help to know something about the origin of these Ember Days, and so keep in touch with the liturgical spirit of the Church.

#### 2. *Their origin :*

The name was given to the fasts which were celebrated each season. Properly speaking there were only three, because those of Spring coincided with Lent, and so did not have quite the same meaning as the others. The common opinion is that these fasts had a relation to the harvests, according to a statement attributed to Pope Calixtus; It was laid down that the Saturday fast should be undertaken three times a year, namely, at the time of the corn the wine

and the oil. According to Morin they had their origin in the sanctification of the old pagan feasts, known by the name of harvest festivals, feast of the wine-gathering and the feast of the sowing. Just as these had an agricultural flavour, so too do the fasts of the Church. We offer, says St Leo, the sacrifice of our fastings and abstinence for the harvest of all the fruits of the earth, to God the great giver of them all.

3. *Their significance:*

The idea of preparation for the giving of Orders on the Saturday of the Ember Days is not an early custom, although it does go back to the time of Gelasius I. Although they were days of penance they also had a festive character. These fasts were very different, then, from those of Lent. They began in Rome, a city whose principal riches lay in agriculture. From Rome they passed into Gaul, Germany and Spain. Today they are not celebrated by the Church, their memory being preserved solely in the Missal. However, it might be useful to celebrate them once more, especially among agricultural people, with litanies, the blessing of the fields, etc.

In any case, they should be a time of prayer for those who are to be ordained. This is the official time for ordinations, even though they may possibly be held at other times. We should pray that God may pour out his choicest graces on those who are soon to be his ministers.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Ephesians 4. 1-6

i. *Texts:*

(a) Here, then, is one who wears chains in the Lord's service . . .

The Epistle to the Ephesians is one of the so-called captivity epistles, written by Paul from prison. He is the model for all those who aim at being apostles, who live lives of sacrifice and austerity; an example to the faithful and to our enemies alike.

(b) to live as befits men called to such a vocation as yours ...

This call is undoubtedly that to the faith, and what we are commanded to do by St Paul is to live in conformity with the teachings and the demands of that faith, being grateful to God who, out of so many millions, has called us. This may be linked, in preaching on it, with those parables concerning the withdrawal of the vocation or graces (talents, the banquet, etc.), so that they can be given to those who will make a better use of them.

(c) You must be always humble, always gentle . . .

It is worthy of note that St Paul, whenever he talks about the virtues which a man should present to God in thanksgiving for this call, always begins with the social virtues. He gives us the reason



himself: eager to preserve that unity the Spirit gives you, whose bond is peace. The fact that this unity is a precious thing is demonstrated by the fact that the Lord himself, at the Last Supper, prayed for it as a last gift of the Father to us, together with the fact that, after so many centuries, we still think of it as a distinctive mark of the true Church of Christ. If it is a sign of the true Church it will also be a sign of a true Christian.

Charity and love are the model for the Christian, and where they exist God exists, and from them will flow naturally all these other virtues he mentions.

(d) You are one body, with a single Spirit. ..

i. *intrinsic elements*. St Paul mentions here those factors which go to make up the Church; three of them being intrinsic to her, namely a body, a Spirit and hope; other three extrinsic, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Finally, there is one element which is over all, namely, the same God, the same Father of all of us, who is above all beings, pervades all things, and lives in all of us.

By the body he means, of course, the mystical body of Christ, the visible organization of the Church; the Spirit is the Holy Ghost, soul of the Church; the third is hope, that anchor of the soul which reminds us of the motive for our life. This motive of hope rests on the grace of God, who has given us his most solemn promises; with these we travel on towards our salvation, confident in him who called us.

ii. *extrinsic elements*. The Lord Jesus, head of the mystical Body; the faith or collection of revealed truths related to him; baptism which makes us members of the kingdom of Christ. Above all these is the Father, who sent the Son to redeem us and the Holy Spirit to sanctify his Church, so as to give us personally all the means of salvation and sanctification; so that the Holy Trinity could dwell in us. The authority with which he can demand our obedience, the right he has to our love as a Father—these are the chains which bind us in a social unity as a Body and with Christ, our Head. He is above all as the Lord, with all by his graces and by the indwelling of his Spirit.

2. *Applications*:

The first must be our constant desire for unity among Christians, unity of thought, desires and actions. We are not members of one sole organization, but of one Body. The Church is not merely a union of individuals who are working for the same ends under the same authority; it is a living and dynamic organism, as is the human body, whose head is Christ and whose soul is the Spirit. There is no place here for quarrels; all must be subject to the common good of the whole. The second thought is that of living according to the faith which has been given to us.

## B: The Gospel: Matthew 22. 34-46

I. *Occasion and argument:*

On several occasions we have made mention of that Tuesday in Holy Week when our Lord's enemies made a common front against him, propounding various questions, with the idea of catching him out or being able to refute him in one of them at least. When Christ had confounded the Sadducees when they proposed their rather gross question concerning the resurrection, one of the scribes, whose intention we shall discuss later, asked him the well-known question about the greatest commandment of the law.

The reply was as simple as it had been on other occasions, but after it had been given, Christ passes to the offensive, in which he would pronounce the most violent discourse of his life against the judges of Israel and especially against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But before he did it he proposed a question to them, with the idea of making them keep silent. He wanted to show them that they had asked him many questions, all of which he had answered; they, in their turn, were incapable of answering a simple question which he put to them. Thus he could begin his invective against them without interruption.

Thus, the Gospel is divided into two parts, the last question proposed by the Pharisees and that put forward by our Lord. The latter part needs no deep explanation, because if the Jews did not answer it then it was either through ignorance or because they did not wish him to revile them any more. The former has already been dealt with in this work, especially in the commentary on the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

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2. *Texts:*

## (a) And one of them, a lawyer, put a question to try him ...

It is not clear in any of the Gospels if this man was in good faith or not; whether he had heard the wise answers of Christ to the other questions and had decided to put this one to him, one which was in dispute amongst the doctors, or whether he was a delegate of the Pharisees. St Matthew says that the purpose was to try Christ, to trap him; on the other hand, St Mark gives the impression that the scribe spoke enthusiastically once he saw how Christ had confounded the Pharisees. The words of Christ that he was not far from the kingdom seem to imply that he was in good faith (Mark 12. 34).

## (b) The greatest commandment. . .

The question is not such an easy one as it appears at first sight, at least to the casuistic rabbis and Pharisees, who had made a list of 613 precepts of the Law, of which 248 were positive and 365 negative. This gave them plenty of room for discussion about the problem of which was the most important.



(c) **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . .**

These words of Deuteronomy form part of the *shema* which even-pious Jew had to recite twice a day. Christ adds, without being asked, what is the second, namely, the love of our neighbour (Lev. 19. 18).

(d) **On these two commandments all the law and the prophets depend . . .**

Here the Lord makes the whole of the Old Law depend on the fulfilment of these two precepts, saying that we shall fulfil all our obligations if we love God and our neighbour.

(e) **Then, while the Pharisees were still gathered about him . . .**

His real enemies are before him and now Jesus takes the initiative. We should not forget that Palm Sunday, with the triumph which his adversaries could not stand, was very near. The Lord puts them a question about the Messias. The solution to the whole matter would have been simple had they admitted that the Messias, apart from being a son of David, was also the Son of God. But the Jews did not know this, even though the Old Testament gave them more than sufficient evidence for the truth of it. Perhaps Jesus was already thinking that it would be this question put to him by Caiphas which would lead to his condemnation and death. On that occasion they sought the quickest way of attaining their object, by condemnation for blasphemy. It was not enough, in their eyes, to accuse him of being a false Messias, because that would have implied a long judicial process which they did not want. What they desired was to surprise him in a thing like blasphemy, which took with it instantaneous condemnation to death. If, on this occasion, they had answered that the Messias was God himself, then the process of his condemnation would have been much slower, because they would have had to pass in review all his miracles one by one, to see if they proved his messianic character and also his claim to be God.

This is not, then, a vain question or one which has little or no importance. It is fundamental for religion and for the judicial process which is to come so soon now.

(f) **Whose son is he ?**

The reply is a simple one: David's—because that was one of the messianic titles, one which the blind men at the gates of Jericho had given to our Lord.

If that is so, then how is it that David, in Ps. 109, calls him Lord ?

According to the Jewish way of thinking, no ancestor can call his successor Lord, on the contrary, and still less in such an emphatic manner as does this psalm. The real answer could now be given by any child in a catechism class: the fact was that the Messias was a son of David by descent, but since he was also God, even David would have to bend the knee before him.



In the time of Christ the Jews thought that this psalm, like Ps. 2 which is similar in tone and expression, referred to the Messiah; but later on the arguments with the Christians led them to deny this, so that they need not give the answer Christ demanded. They made the psalm refer to Abraham, to Solomon, to King Ezechias—to anyone except the Messiah.

### 3. *Applications:*

The first is that of the precept of the love of God and the neighbour. The second that of the messianic and divine nature of Christ our Lord. He affirmed that he was the Messiah from the first moment of his life; the first year quietly to anyone who was prepared for it; the last two openly and publicly to all men.

The same can be said about his claim to be God. Even those who oppose him admit that the Gospel of St John is clear on this point, although they say that it was written at a much later date and that, by that time, the idea of his divinity had taken a hold on his followers. Even leaving aside that the Jewish type of mind could have reached such a conclusion in such a short time—a thing which is impossible—we can reply that, in the other Evangelists, there is abundant proof of the same claim. Without going into any more details we may cite just one thing—the condemnation of Christ by the High Priest precisely because he made this claim.

The Jews will not admit it, and this fact gives us an opportunity of pointing out how passion clouds the intellect and how prejudice refuses to allow us to admit things which are really simple and clear. Psalm 109 with its verse: Sit at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool, with the commentary provided by Ps. 2, gives us an opportunity for talking about the Prince of peace. In constant struggle against the princes of this world, he destroyed their authority and power, destroyed even death itself with his resurrection, overcame with his resurrection the enemies against whom he had to fight, and in his Church continues to destroy Satan in all fields.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST GERMANUS

#### Our Lady

It is convenient to carry the discussion into another field. I know that our first parents were cast out of the garden of Paradise dressed in skins, weak and half-dead because of the sentence of death hurled against them. But their daughter, the blessed Virgin Mary, leaving aside those small signs of her descent from them, such as that of a mortal body, far surpassed them in all things. Living among men,

she raised herself to an angelical purity, as if she had no body; and she seemed like that tall ladder whose head was in the heavens. That is, she considered all the time the good things which are there, while the foot of the ladder was on the earth, namely while the weight of her mortal body kept her on this earth. By her the angels went up to heaven, but descended to earth again, overcome by her virginal purity, while God rested on her. Immortal God, what a cumulation of graces! What dignity that of the Virgin, and what majesty! Nothing can adequately describe her glory, all fall short, even the seraphim with the six wings standing before God. . . .

Wherefore there was nothing in her which was not pleasing to the divine Majesty, nothing unworthy of that great mystery. Turning to what we said before, she did not deny that she was a child of Eve by nature, nor did she entirely reject that dress of skins. By her obedience she admitted her blood line; but not because of that was she subject to all that is human, i.e. those cares and tribulations which are a part of this mortal life (*Collección escogida de los SS. Padres* (1879), V).

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

### The Two Precepts

#### Faith with love, the distinguishing mark of a Christian

##### I. *Love, the work of faith:*

I suppose that those of you who assisted yesterday will remember the point we reached in our exposition of this letter, which was: This is the divine command which has been given us; the man who loves God must be one who loves his brother as well. This much has already been explained. Now we shall see what follows: Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God (1 John 5. 1).

Who is he who does not believe that Jesus is the Christ? He who does not love as Christ commanded. For there are many who say: I believe, I have faith. But faith without works will not save us. The work of faith is love, as the apostle says (Gal. 5.6). Your past works which you did before you began to believe were either of no use at all or, if they had the appearances of good, were in vain. If they were of no use then you were like a man with no feet or whose feet are useless, you could not run. If they appeared to be good then you did indeed run, but since you were not running on the right path, then, instead of arriving at the goal, you went astray. We have to run indeed, but on the right path. He who runs along the wrong path runs a useless race, or perhaps it would be better to say that he runs only to tire himself. And what is the path on which we run? Christ told us: I am the way. What is the kingdom towards which we run? Christ also told us that: I am the truth. You run through him, you run to him, in him you rest. But so that we might run through him,

he had to lean down to us, because we were afar off from him, we journeyed afar off. It is even a small thing to say that we were travelling a long way off; we were actually without strength and we could not move. The physician came to the sick and the way was opened out to the travellers. We were saved by him, we journey through him. This is to believe that Jesus is the Christ, as those Christians do who are not merely so in name only, but in works; not as the devils believe.

*2. The faith of the Christian goes hand in hand with love:*

And to love the parent is to love his child (1 John 5. 1). At once he links with faith, because faith without love is vain. With love, it is the faith of a Christian; without it, it is the faith of the devils. Now, those who do not believe are worse than the devils, harder hearted than they. There are those who do not wish to believe in Christ; they do not even imitate the devils. There are those who hate Christ ... they are like the devils, who said: What have we to do with thee, Son of God? Hast thou come to condemn us before the time? (Mark i. 24). Add love to this faith, so that it may be converted into that faith of which the apostle speaks, faith which works through love. If you have found this faith then you have found a Christian, you have found a citizen of Jerusalem, a companion to the angels, a pilgrim who is on the right path. Join him, be his companion, run with him. . . .

*3. The sons of God are the body of the Son of God:*

We can be sure of loving God's sons.... What is this, my brethren? A moment ago he spoke of the Son of God, not of his sons. He told us that Christ was the object of our contemplation and said to us: Everyone that believes that Jesus is the Christ is a son of God and to love the parent is to love the child, that is God's child, Christ! Now he continues: If we love God and keep his commandments we can be sure of loving God's children; when it would appear that he should have said, we can be sure of loving God's child—Christ. . . . The children of God are the body of the only Son of God. Since he is the head and we the members, there is only one son of God. Therefore he who loves the sons of God loves the Son of God, and he who loves the Son of God loves the Father. It is impossible for anyone to love the Father who does not love the Son; nor can he love the Son who does not love the sons of God. What sons of God? The members of the Son of God. Loving, one becomes a member, one is united to the whole body of Christ; from which comes one sole Christ who loves himself.

It is obvious that, when the members love one another, it is the whole body which loves itself. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one is glorified; all are glorified with it (1 Cor. 12. 26).



4. *Who loves the Head must love the Body:*

You may say to me: I love the Father and the Son; but only the Father and the Son. I love only that Word of God by whom were made all things in heaven and on earth, who was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. You are lying, because if you love the head you must also love the body; and if you do not love the members, nor do you love the head. Does not the very voice of the Head frighten you when he cries out from heaven in favour of his members: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? He calls him a persecutor of himself who persecuted his members, his lover, one who loves his members. You know well, brethren, who are his members; the Church itself.

5. *God's command:*

We groan here below because of the difficulty we find in fulfilling God's command. Listen to what I am going to say to you. O Man, you wear yourself out loving avarice! Only with weariness does one love what you love; but without weariness one loves God. Avarice has sent you work, worn', tribulation, dangers, and all for what? So that you could have that necessary to fill your coffers and which causes you to lose your peace of mind? Perhaps you were more at peace when you did not have that which you now possess. That is what avarice has done for you. You have filled your house and you are afraid of robbers; you have acquired gold, and you have lost sleep over it. That is what avarice has made you do. But what did God tell you to do? Love him. You love gold, you seek it and perhaps you do not find it. But he who seeks me, says God, will find me. You love men and perhaps you do not attain the object of your love. Who ever loved me and did not reach me? God says to you. You seek a powerful friend and you do so by the mediation of others. Love me, and you will not have to seek me through others, because love itself will bring me to you.

6. *Love, man's final end:*

Listen to me. Does any one of you seek gold? Do not make it your last end. Pass it by like pilgrims. Seek a resting-place, not a permanent dwelling. If you love money then you are already in the net of avarice. It will be like a stocks on your feet—you will not be able to advance one step. Pass over all that; seek your last end.

Do you search for bodily health? Don't rest there either. What is this health of the body? It ends with death in any case and is weakened by sickness. Health by all means, provided you understand that it is mortal and passing; it is a good thing that you should seek it in that way, so that it does not impede your good works.

Do you look for honours? Perhaps with the idea of doing something great, of finishing something you have started, for the glory of God? Very well; but do not love dignity for its own sake? do not

rest there. If you seek your own glory, that is a bad thing; if you seek that of God, it is good. If you are praised, then make sure that it is in the Lord. . . . You say something which is worthy of praise; make sure that it is not praised because it is yours, because that is not the end of life. If you fix your end there, then it is you who are finished. And you do not finish by preaching perfection, but condemnation.

7. *To love God is to love all men—charity has no limits:*

Spread out your charity to the whole world if you wish to love Christ our Lord, since the members of Christ are scattered over the whole world. If you love only a part, you are divided, you are not in the body; and if you are not in the body you are not under the Head. Of what use is your faith if at the same time you blaspheme? You adore him in the head and you blaspheme against his body. He loves his body. Just because you cut yourself off from his body he is not going to do the same. In vain do you honour me, he cries out, as the head of that body, in vain do you honour me. It is as if someone were to kiss you on the cheek and stamp on your feet. Would you not cry out: What are you doing, you are hurting my feet! . . .

8. *Christ lives in all men:*

See how far he wishes to extend his body. You shall be witness to me in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. See where I am, I who ascend into heaven. I ascend it is true, because I am the Head; but my body remains. And how far does it extend? To the whole earth. Be careful not to wound it, not to violate or tread on it!

These are the last words of Christ when he was about to ascend into heaven. Imagine someone on their death bed, worn out by illness, near the very moment of death, his soul on the point of leaving his body. Suddenly he remembers something which he loves; he calls his heirs and says to them: I beg of you that you do this or that. It is almost as though such a one were clutching on to his soul so that it would not leave his body until he had time to arrange this matter. No sooner has he said these words than he dies, and they carry his body to the tomb. How his heirs would remember those last words! If someone should say to them: Do not do it, what would they answer? What, not fulfil my father's last wishes? The last thing that rang in my ears before he died? Anything else I might pass over, but not his last words, they seem to have a greater binding force. I did not see him or hear him speak again.

If the last words of a father who is then carried to the tomb are so precious to his heirs, what must the last words of Christ mean to his heirs? Words of one who does not go down to the tomb, but who ascends into heaven! . . . What will be the fate of those who do not pay attention to the last words of him who is now seated in heaven, he who, from above, can see if his words are ignored or carried out?



He who said. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? He who reserves till the day of judgement all those things which his members have to suffer on earth? (*Sermo* 10 and *Sermo* 6).

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### Patience and perseverance

##### 1. *Patience:*

The moral virtues are directed to the good, inasmuch as they safeguard the good of reason against the impulse of the passions. Now among the passions sorrow is strong to hinder the good of reason. . . . Hence the necessity for a virtue to safeguard the good of reason against sorrow, lest reason give way to sorrow'; and this is what patience does. Wherefore Augustine says: A man's patience it is whereby he bears evil with an equal mind, i.e. without being disturbed by sorrow', lest he abandon with an unequal mind the goods whereby he may advance to better things. It is therefore evident that patience is a virtue (2-2. q.-136. a. 1. c).

Patience is not the greatest of the virtues, but falls short, not only of the theological virtues, and of prudence and justice which directly establish man in good, but also of fortitude and temperance which withdraw him from greater obstacles to good (*ibid.* art. 2. c).

It is evident that patience is caused by charity, according to 1 Cor. 13. 4, Charity is patient. But it is manifest that it is impossible to have charity save through grace, according to Rom. 5. 5, The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us. Therefore it is clearly impossible to have patience without the help of grace (*ibid.* art. 3. c).

##### 2. *Perseverance:*

###### (a) A virtue:

According to the philosopher, virtue is about the difficult and the good; and so where there is a special kind of difficulty or goodness, there is a special virtue. Now a virtuous deed may involve goodness or difficulty on two counts. First from the act's very species, which is considered in respect of the proper object of that act: secondly from the length of time, since to persist long in something good until it is accomplished belongs to a special virtue.

Accordingly, just as temperance and fortitude are special virtues for the reason that the one moderates pleasures of touch (*which is of itself* a difficult thing) while the other moderates fear and daring in connection with dangers of death (which is also something difficult



in itself) so perseverance is a special virtue, since it consists in enduring delays in the above or other virtuous deeds, so far as necessity requires (2-2. q. 137. a. 1. c).

(b) Act and habit:

The term perseverance is sometimes used to denote the habit whereby one chooses to persevere, sometimes for the act of persevering; and sometimes one who has the habit of perseverance chooses to persevere and begins to carry out his choice by persisting for a time, yet completes not the act, through not persisting to the end. Now, the end is twofold; one is the end of the work, the other is the end of human life. Properly speaking it belongs to perseverance to persevere to the end of the virtuous work, for instance that a soldier persevere to the end of the fight and a magnanimous man until the end of his work be accomplished. There are, however, some virtues whose acts must endure throughout the whole of life, such as faith, hope and charity, since they regard the last end of the entire life of man. Wherefore, as regards these which are the principal virtues, the act of perseverance is not accomplished until the end of life *{ibid}*.

(c) Part of fortitude:

Now the endurance of difficulty arising from delay in accomplishing a good work gives perseverance its claim to praise; nor is this so difficult as to endure dangers of death. Therefore perseverance is annexed to fortitude, as secondary to principal virtue *{ibid. art. 2. c}*.

(d) Its relation to constancy:

Perseverance and constancy agree as to end, since it belongs to both of them to persist firmly in some good; but they differ as to those things which make it difficult to persist in good. Because the virtue of perseverance properly makes a man persist firmly in good against the difficulty that arises from the very continuance of the act; whereas constancy makes him persist firmly in good against difficulties arising from any other external hindrances. Hence perseverance takes precedence of constancy as a part of fortitude, because the difficulty arising from continuance of an act is more intrinsic to the act of virtue than that which arises from external obstacles *{ibid. art. 3. c}*.

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(c) Its relation to grace:

Perseverance has a twofold signification. First, it denotes the habit of perseverance considered as a virtue. In this way it needs the gift of habitual grace, even as the other infused virtues. Secondly, it may be taken to denote the act of perseverance enduring until death; and in this sense it needs not only habitual grace, but also the gratuitous help of God sustaining man in good until the end of life....

Because, since the free will is changeable by its very nature, which changeableness is not taken away from it by the habitual grace bestowed in the present life, it is not in the power of the free will, albeit repaired by grace, to abide unchangeably in good, though it is in its power to choose this; for it is often in our power to choose but not to accomplish (*ibid.* art. 4. c).

Man is able by himself to fall into sin, but he cannot by himself arise from sin without the help of grace. Hence by falling into sin, so far as he is concerned man makes himself to be persevering in sin, unless he be delivered by God's grace. On the other hand, by doing good he does not make himself to be persevering in good, because he is able, by himself, to sin; wherefore he needs the help of grace for that end (*ibid.* art. 4. c. *et ad ÿum* ).

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

#### Love one another

The day so ardently desired by our Lord has come. . . . He has eaten the Jewish Pasch with his disciples; but he has replaced the figures and symbols by a Divine reality; he has just instituted the Sacrament of union and given his apostles the power of perpetuating it. And now it is that, before his death, he opened his Sacred Heart to reveal its secrets to his friends; it is like the last will and testament of Christ. A new commandment I give unto you, he says, that you love one another as I have loved you; and at the end *of* his discourse, he renews his precept: This is my commandment, that you love one another. . . . And he holds so much to the observance of this commandment that he asks his Father to bring about this mutual love in his disciples: Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we also are. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

Jesus did not make this prayer only for his disciples, but for us all: And not for them only do I pray, he says, but for them also who believe in me; that they may be all one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

So this commandment of the love of our brethren is the supreme wish of Christ; it is so much his desire that he makes of it, not a counsel, but a commandment, his commandment, and he makes the fulfilment of it the infallible sign by which his disciples shall be recognized. . . . It is a sign all can understand, none other is given\* *cognoscent omnes*: no one can be mistaken as to it; the supernatural love you have for one another will be the unequivocal proof that you



truly belong to me. And, in fact, in the first centuries the pagans recognized the Christians by this sign: See, they would say, how they love one another. For our Lord himself, it will be the sign he will use in the day of judgement to distinguish the elect from the reprobate; he himself says so; let us listen to him, for he is the infallible truth.

After the resurrection of the dead, the Son of Man will be seated on the throne of his majesty; the nations will be gathered together before him; he will place the good on his right hand and the wicked on his left. And speaking to the good he will say: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And what reason will he give for this? I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked, and you covered me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. And the just will wonder, for never have they seen Christ in these necessities. But he will answer them: Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me. He will then speak after the same manner to the wicked. He will separate them for ever from himself. He will curse them. Why? Because they have not loved him in the person of his brethren.

Thus, from the mouth of Jesus himself, we know that the sentence which will decide our eternal lot will be founded on the love we have for Jesus Christ in the person of our brethren. When we appear before Christ on the last day, he will not ask us if we have fasted a great deal, if we have passed our life in penance, if we have given many hours to prayer; no, but if we have loved and helped our brethren. Are the other commandments, then, to be put aside? Certainly not, but our observance of them will have served for nothing if we have not kept this precept of loving one another—this precept which is so dear to our Lord, since it is his commandment...

Hear what St Teresa says likewise on this subject; the text is a little long, but it is very explicit. God asks of you only two things, the one is to love him, and the other is to love our neighbour. That is, therefore, what we have to do and to strive for; in accomplishing this perfectly we shall be doing his will and shall be united to him. . . . That is the aim, but are we sure of attaining it? The most certain sign by which we may know if we are faithfully practising these two commandments, says the Saint, is in my opinion, if we have a true and genuine love for our neighbour. For we cannot know for certain to what extent we love God, although there are many signs by which we may judge of this; but we shall see much more clearly where the love of our neighbour is concerned. It is then extremely important to consider carefully the disposition of our soul and our outward behaviour towards our neighbour. If, both interiorly and exteriorly,



all is perfect, then we can be well assured, for, considering the depravity of our nature, we could never love our neighbour perfectly unless we had within us a great love for God. . . .

There are souls that seek God in Jesus Christ and accept the humanity of Christ, but stop there. That is not sufficient; we must accept the Incarnation with all the consequences it involves; we must not let the gift of ourselves stop at Christ's own humanity but extend it to his Mystical Body. That is why—never forget this, for it is one of the most important points of the supernatural life—to abandon the least of our brethren is to abandon Christ himself; to succour one of them, is to succour Christ in person. . . . Christ has become our neighbour, or rather our neighbour is Christ, presenting himself to us under such or such a form. He presents himself to us suffering in the sick, in the needy, in those who are in want, a prisoner in those in captivity, sad in those who mourn. But it is faith that shows him thus in his members, and if we do not see him in them, it is because our faith is weak, our love imperfect. . . .

I have already said, in speaking of the Church, that there is something remarkable in the divine economy such as it has been manifested to us since the Incarnation, and this is the large place held by men, like to ourselves, in the distribution of grace.

If we would know the authentic doctrine of Christ, we have not to ask it directly of God, nor seek it ourselves in the inspired Books, interpreting them by our own judgement; but we have to ask it of the pastors constituted to govern the Church. But these are men, you will say; men like ourselves. That does not matter, it is to them we must go; they represent Christ, it is Christ we must see in them. He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.

In the same way, in order to receive the Sacraments, we must receive them by the hand of men appointed by Christ; in baptism, penance, etc., it is Christ who confers the sacraments upon us, but by the hands of men.

It is the same with charity. Do you wish to love God? Do you wish to love Jesus Christ? And we ought to do so, because it is the greatest and the first commandment. Love your neighbour, love those with whom you live; love them because God destines all, as he destines you, to the same eternal beatitude merited by Christ, our one and only head, because it is under the form of our neighbour that God presents himself to us here below. . . .

I am sure that many souls will find here the reason of the difficulties, the sadness, the want of expansion in their inner life; they do not give themselves enough to Christ in the person of his members; they hold themselves back too much. If they would but give, it would be given to them abundantly; for Jesus Christ will not let himself be outdone in love; if they would overcome their selfishness

and give themselves generously to their neighbour for God's sake, Christ would give himself to them in his fullness; if they would forget themselves, Christ would take the care of them upon himself, and who better than he can lead us to beatitude ?

It is not a small thing to love our neighbour always and unfailingly; it needs a strong and generous love. Although the love of God is in itself, on account of the transcendence of its object, more perfect than the love of our neighbour, yet as the motive ought to be the same in the love we bear to God and that we bear to our neighbour, often the act of love towards the neighbour requires more intensity and gains more merit. Why is this? Because God, being himself goodness and beauty, and having shown infinite love towards us, grace urges us to love him; while, as for our neighbour, there is always the probability of meeting in him—or in ourselves—with obstacles resulting from the differences of interest that arise between us. These difficulties require from the soul more fervour, more generosity, more forgetfulness of self and one's own feelings and personal desires; that is why, if love towards our neighbour is to be maintained, there is more need of effort. . . . Let us, then, endeavour first of all to love God by keeping united to our Lord; then from this divine love, as from a glowing furnace whence a thousand rays shine forth to give light and warmth, our charity will be extended to all around us and so much the further according as the furnace is the more ardent. . . . Let us never forget the principle that should guide us in this path—we are all one in Christ; and it is charity that preserves this unity. We only go to the Father by Christ; but we must accept Christ entirely, in himself and in his members; there lies the secret of the true divine life within us (*Christ, the Life of the Soul*, chap. xii).

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## II. GERARD GILLEMAN, S.J.

(Some extracts from the Introduction to his book *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, Burns & Oates, 1960.)

In order to understand the meaning of moral life, it is necessary to penetrate the mystery of man himself, for action follows being. The philosophers had long tried to build an ethics patterned on what man could know about himself by studying his own nature; at best this would be an ethics based on the notion of a creature depending on a personal God known as perfect Being. . . .

In fact, until the moment of the Incarnation, man remained for himself a baffling mystery, mainly because of the inheritance of egoism which he carried within himself since the original fall. When God himself revealed what man is in virtue of divine election, and what the exigencies of his supernatural moral life were, it was for

human consciousness as novel and striking as new wine breaking old bottles, or as a blinding light in the darkness. It was the very structure of this morality that was new, for it contained the germ of an ontology of man and his actions of which philosophers could never dream. The core of the 'good news' was this: God is charity, and we are no longer merely his creatures or participations, but we are really his sons, invited *in Filio* to communion with the Father. With this the whole world was renewed; man could no longer live as before. It was only a matter of time before the message would be spread throughout the universe and leaven it. No wonder that it aroused opposition, for it touched on human egoism as a hot poker on an open wound. It was a fire and had to burn; a light, and had to shine before all; but the darkness would not receive it; egoism felt the challenge and hugged the dark. The first preachers of the message of love were condemned to death as Christ himself, just as he had predicted. The early Christians lived so close to the generosity of Christ's sacrifice that martyrdom was their ideal. What is more, this new spirit found in each convert something to destroy and mortify; the old inheritance of human egoism. To follow the new gospel is to carry one's cross each day; it is dying to the old, in order to live to the new. A new man, reborn, must replace the old man, and they will war against one another. One must test one's own sincerity, just as a man who desires to build must decide whether he is willing to pay the price, to take it or leave it; one cannot adhere to, and at the same time reject, the gospel of charity. Only he that shall lose his old life shall find the new. To pay the full price of the treasure-field, one must sell all his goods; he must even pluck out his eye to save this new life. How terribly exacting are the requirements of the gospel!

That is why the gospel for the early Christians was real news. Though dramatic, it was nevertheless good news, a message of joy so overwhelming that it entails a duty of continuous joy, and makes him exult who realizes his good fortune.

What, then, is this novelty which so takes hold of a man that he is willing to die for it and can smile even in the face of death :

We have already pointed out that it is the revelation of love. St John insists that God is *Agapè*. But, after all, is there anything astonishing in this revelation ? Is not love an essential attribute of the Supreme Being, just as wisdom and goodness ? But we learn from the gospel that God possesses his own essence in the intimate communications of a Trinitarian life. This is, then, a revelation of a radically new kind of love.

If God should decide, *liberrimo consilio*, to bring into being a spiritual creature, it would evidently be necessary that its nature should be a certain participation of the divinity and that, right from the beginning, love be its very fabric. What else could it be since



## SPIRITUAL WRITERS

there was nothing but love—that is, Being—to be participated ? More than that, God elevated our diluted love to the gratuitous communication of the *Agape* wherein man partakes of the intimate life of the Trinity. . . .

It follows, therefore, that Christian action will necessarily consist in transferring this particular way of being—which is loving—into second act. Adopting this perspective, we see at once all the commandments and, in fact, the whole of gospel morals converging towards charity. God being love, his greatest and first commandment will be the obligation of loving; everything is contained in this one point, for it recapitulates every precept whatsoever; it is the link of perfection, binding in one bundle all the virtues. Though each virtue retains its proper character, we must not forget that virtue is the ordering of love, as St Augustine puts it. To love is a way more sublime than all charisms; it is the beginning of eternal life.

Now, whom must we love ? Obviously enough, God. But the same movement of love must attain all those who are related to God; did he not include us all in himself, loving us all right from the beginning, so that his own love is now loving in us and through us ? In other words, Christian society is nothing less than a society pervaded by Trinitarian love. That is why the distinctive mark of Christians is charity towards others considered as concrete images of Christ and of God invisible. Taken as a society, the Church is, in a certain sense, a witness ; the mutual union of her members is a living testimony of the intimate unity of the divine Persons.

### m. DAVID GREENSTOCK

(Some extracts from chapter IX of *Be Ye Perfect*, concerning charity as the bond of perfection.)

When we seek an answer to this same problem of the preponderance of the love motive in our spiritual lives, from reason illuminated by faith, we receive exactly the same answer. St Thomas leads us gently to the solution by providing us first of all with the general principles from which that solution follows naturally. The main-spring of all activity, especially in those creatures endowed with any kind of sensation, is desire for something or other. This is especially true of man. We act because we wish to attain some end by means of our actions; if there were no object to be attained we would not act. If we consider especially the more intimate human relationships, we shall find that love is particularly the bond of union between the lover and the beloved. Christ is, then, the principal element in all Christian perfection, because it is essentially the bond which joins us to the one we love. No other virtue can effect this union in quite the same intimate fashion. The other virtues can, it is true, prepare

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our souls for this union, but they cannot bring it about. This is true of the moral virtues, and it is also true of the two theological virtues of faith and hope. Faith unites the soul to God as the supreme truth, but it can co-exist in the soul with mortal sin. Hope raises us towards God as the supreme good, who has promised us his help to attain eternal happiness; but hope too can exist in the soul at the same time as serious sin, which turns man away from that final end.

There are, then, two things which can unite the rational creature with God, his last end, even in this life; the knowledge of God and the love of him. St Thomas is the very first to admit that, as a faculty, the intellect is superior to the will, and that, in heaven, our happiness consists essentially in the vision of God face to face, which is an act of the intellect, with the consequent motions of the will towards perfect love of God. Yet, one with the doctrine of Scripture and tradition, he affirms that, in this life, the formal or directive element in all Christian perfection is charity, which, as a virtue, resides in the will, not in the intellect. Why, then, this difference between our future life in heaven and our spiritual life on earth? There, in the future life of glory, the most important act and the most perfect is one of the intellect. Here below it is one of the will. St Thomas also gives us the reason for this in a passage which is of great importance for the spiritual life.

It is quite possible, he tells us, for one faculty to be superior to another while at the same time, owing to special circumstances, the act of the inferior faculty may be far superior to that of the higher faculty. Afterwards he applies this general doctrine to the faculties of intellect and will, showing how it comes about that the act of the will can surpass that of the intellect in this life. Although it has been quoted by many authors, we offer no apology for repeating the passage here, because of its importance.

Something is required for the perfection of knowledge which is not required for the perfection of love. Knowledge is an act of the reason, whose function it is to distinguish and combine. Therefore, for the perfection of knowledge it is necessary that a man should know the different parts which go to make up a thing, i.e. the parts, the properties and the powers of it. But love is a part of the appetitive power of man, which considers the thing as it is in itself; therefore, for the perfection of love it is quite sufficient that the thing should be apprehended as it is in itself and loved like that; from which it follows that a thing is often loved more perfectly than it is known, because it can be loved perfectly even though it is not perfectly known (2-2. q. 27. a. 2. *ad 2um*).

The reasoning is clear and conclusive. Our knowledge of God in this life is by faith. Although faith tells us much about God and his mysteries, yet our grasp of these things remains essentially obscure while we are still on earth. Our knowledge of anything remains



imperfect while there is some part of that thing which we do not yet understand; and we do not yet see God as he is. . . . Love on the other hand is not held in such tight bondage. Our faith reaches out towards knowledge of God as far as revealed truth will take it; beyond that it cannot go. Charity, on the other hand, has for its object, not that small part of God which he has deigned to reveal to us, but God himself as he really is in his ineffable majesty and as he is possessed by the blessed in heaven. Thus charity is able to ignore the weakness and the defects in our knowledge of God and, leaping over all the obstacles and obscurities, attains to God as he really is. That is why the act of charity in uniting us with God in this life is more perfect than that of our faith, which cannot go beyond the limits of revealed truth. This is also why charity is to be regarded as the element in all Christian perfection which gives form and direction to the whole of that new supernatural life. Love ignores all obstacles; it can be the love of something which is present or absent; it can love with equal effect whether the thing is seen clearly by the intellect or only dimly. Thus charity in the soul remains essentially the same in this life and in the next.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### The Triumph of Christ

#### The ideas for this Sunday

1. In the texts of today's Mass we find material for three great ideas :
  - (a) Christ is the Son of God, who sits on the right hand of the Father in heaven until the day of his triumphal return;
  - (b) the Church is the mystical Body of Christ, a powerful unity, and we are the members of that body;
  - (c) charity, the supreme precept of the law.
2. Nevertheless we can unify all this by saying that the predominant idea of this Sunday is the unity of Christendom.
  - (a) Of Christians among themselves;
  - (b) of all Christians with Christ, who reigns in triumph at the right hand of the Father.

#### Christ the victor

1. The Gospel makes a reference to Ps. 109 which is essentially messianic.
2. In it there are three principal ideas and three aspects of Christ triumphant; he is a king, a priest, and a judge.



(a) king:

i. sit here at my right hand while I make thy enemies a footstool under thy feet.

ii. the Lord will make thy empire spring up like a branch out of Sion; thou art to bear rule in the midst of thy enemies. When thou showest thy power princely state shall be thine.

(b) priest:

The Lord has sworn an oath there is no retracting. Thou art a priest for ever in the line of Melchisedech.

(c) judge:

At thy right hand the Lord beats down kings in the day of his vengeance; he will pass sentence on the nations, and accomplish their ruin; assail a well peopled land and smite down its princes.

### King, priest and judge

1. These three titles of Christ are worthy of consideration, however brief that may be.

2. The royal prerogatives of Christ are repeated many times in the liturgy, especially on the Feast of Christ the King.

(a) The idea of being seated at the right hand of the Father in the psalm we have already quoted means, in oriental language, to participate in the throne and power of the Father. That was the promise made to the Messiah (Ps. 2. 8-9).

(b) Today we may well sing in his honour the words of the prophet Daniel: With that, power was given him, and glory, and sovereignty; obey him all men must, men of every race and tribe and tongue; such a reign as his lasts for ever, such power as his the ages cannot diminish.

(c) Or the other words of St John in the Apocalypse: And this title is written on his cloak, over his thigh, The King of kings, and the Lord of lords (19.16).

(d) Or the words of St Paul: So that everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth must bend the knee before the name of Jesus, and every tongue must confess Jesus Christ as the Lord, dwelling in the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2. 10-11).

3. The priesthood of Christ is wonderfully expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews, especially in chapters 7-8. It would be impossible to quote all the passages here, the whole should be read.

4. The judgement of Christ is represented for us in this psalm as just and severe at the same time.

(a) This idea makes us tremble; and that is the idea of the Introit—You are just, Lord, and thy judgements are right; have mercy on thy servant.

(b) The history of the Church is a judgement on the world by Christ. Many of the great disasters which have fallen on the world can be considered as judgements of the Lord; but they are only pale images of the real judgement which is to come.

## Our happiness

### 1. *We form part with that triumphant Christ:*

Not in any minor fashion, but in a most intimate way since we are one body with him and one unity.

### 2. *We are his friends, we form one unity with him:*

(a) for which reason we say, in the Gradual, Happy that people whose God is the Lord, happy that nation whom the Lord chose as his inheritance.

(b) While to some he appears terrible, to us he is loving and friendly.

## Walking according to our vocation

### 1. *This incorporation in Christ demands certain things from us:*

The Epistle warns us that we must walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called. The apostle insists that this call lies principally in charity.

### 2. *This is the greatest of all the commandments of the Lord:*

#### (a) Thou shalt love the Lord:

Love is the most sublime of all sentiments; he who loves puts the whole of his being, his desires, his thoughts, feelings and aspirations at the service of the beloved;

i. *to love the Lord means referring all things to him, loving all things out of consideration for him and in relation to him;*

ii. *to love with one's whole being is not to love by halves, but with the whole of the will, mind, heart, sentiments and strength.*

iii. *to love without thinking of any advantage for ourselves, of our own honour or satisfaction. To accept, appreciate and make good use of all that God disposes for us according to his will.*

#### (b) our neighbour for God's sake:

It is one and the same love really, since the love of the neighbour is not founded on any natural qualities, but on supernatural charity;

i. *he must be loved for God, since he belongs to God and God is reflected in him;*

ii. *mere human philanthropy cannot take the place of charity, if charity is not present then such attempts would be in vain, because there is no motive for man to think himself obliged to make sacrifices for others, even at times to sacrifice himself.*

## Vows to the Lord

### 1. *The Communion of the A f a w says:*

Makes your vows to the Lord and keep them, all you who gather together to make your offering. Offer them to him who is the Terrible One, to him who humbles the pride of princes and is terrible to all the kings of the earth.

### 2. *Jesus is terrible for his enemies; sweet and gentle to the poor in spirit and to his intimate friends:*

These are the ones who must present themselves before him with their offerings. There is no offering so great as to live a truly Christian life, in a manner worthy of our vocation. So in love and unity' we procure the glory' and splendour of his Body who lives in glory' in the eternal bliss of heaven.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### A: Our vocation as Christians

#### To be saints

#### *We read in today's epistle:*

Pleading with you to live as befits men called to such a vocation as yours (Eph. 4. 1).

(a) This vocation is the one mentioned earlier in the same epistle: He has chosen us out, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saints, to be blameless in his sight, for love of him (Eph. 1. 4).

(b) We have been called to be incorporated into Christ so that we may be saints.

#### Sanctity in love

### I. *According to St Paul:*

The end of the law is sanctity', and the fulfilment of the law is love (Rom. 13. 10).

(a) In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord told us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5. 48).

(b) In his discourse at the Last Supper our Lord tells us how to attain the perfection which he preached on the Mount.

### 2. *To know only the Sermon on the Mount is not enough:*

(a) the greatness lies in the sublime prayer of Christ at the Supper:

i. I have bestowed my love upon you, just as my Father has bestowed his love upon me; live on, then, in my love (John 15. 9).

ii. Holy Father, keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me, that they may be one, as we are one (John 17. 11).



iii. It is not only for them that I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in me through their word; that they may all be one; that they too may be one in us, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; so that the world may come to believe that it is thou who hast sent me (*ibid.* 20-21).

(b) When we connect the supper discourse with the Sermon on the Mount we conclude that holiness consists in love which unites us to God. Greater love, greater union; greater union, greater sanctity.

### 3. *In other words:*

All holiness comes from God because he alone is holy by his very nature; ours is but a sharing in his.

(a) We shall be saints according to the measure we unite ourselves to him and live in union with him and like him ;

(b) but God is essentially love, as St John tells us so many times;

(c) only by love, then, can we make ourselves like him and only love will unite us to God. To be perfect in holiness is to be perfect in love.

## Three demands of love

1. Frequently the Lord says that we must love God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind (Matt. 22. 37; Luke 10. 27).

This precept, according to St Thomas, demands that we love God as much as is possible for us. There can be no limit to our love for God.

2. This love of God to the full extent of our powers demands three things from us :

(a) We must avoid anything that is contrary to the love of God:

i. mortal sin above all;

ii. venial sin, too;

iii. affection for any kind of sin;

iv. he who voluntarily chooses a venial sin or who remains in that state does not love God as much as he can.

(b) We must do all things for God and love nothing except for him and in the measure he has laid down:

i. He does not love God as much as he can who does not root up from his heart any affection or sentiment which is against the law of God or which is not directed towards God ; nor one who is not willing to give up anything, no matter how dear to him, if it should be the will of God.

ii. Each affection which is not directed towards God is a small part of the heart which is stolen from him.

(c) \c must make use of acts of love and devotions which stimulate it in the soul :

We have to be careful about this, because much depends on it (cf. 2-2. q. 124, a. 10).

### The perfection of love

1. This perfection is not to be found on this earth, but in heaven. What we are bound to do is to tend towards it to the best of our ability and with all our strength (2-2. q. 44. a. 7).

The perfection of heaven, which is a model for that of earth, lies in the fact that our love reaches out to God with all its strength and there is no affection, nor any other love which comes between us and God.

2. Therefore the perfection of love does not consist in putting into effect the three demands love makes on us, and which have already been mentioned.

3. But he who does put them into effect can be said to be on the way to sanctity and to the perfect love of God. One day he will reach it. St Thomas gives two reasons :

(a) as charity increases so does the capacity for loving, and so there is always room for more and more love in our hearts ;

(b) if at any given moment one loves with all one's power, at the next moment that love is even greater; so that there is a constant progress, and in that case perfection will be reached one day.

(c) Any human act done from the motive of charity demands an increase of grace and merit, especially if it is done with all our force. Therefore he who fulfils as well as he can this precept of loving God with all his heart, mind and strength, will go on increasing in love constantly and will eventually reach his perfection.

4. It is clear then that such a one will become a saint.

### Walking worthy of our vocation

1. This vocation is sanctity—nothing less.

2. To achieve it, love is the method. These are not two distinct things, but one thing. By seeking the perfection of love we shall fulfil our vocation.

### B: Patience

#### Patience and longanimity

1. The epistle of today warns us that we must be patient—a word which has been translated in some versions by the term longanimity they come to the same thing in the end. " ' '

2. This epistle gives us a chance of dealing with patience.

### What it is not

1. It is not a certain kind of temperament which has nothing to do with the virtue, because it has no moral value.

(a) There are people who are so phlegmatic that they are taken to be patient; they are never in a hurry, without any real vigour, cold and insensible.

(b) This may constitute a negative quality which could help to acquire patience, but is it not the virtue.

2. Much less is it an indifference of mind and heart which comes from some natural discipline—like the Stoics, for example.

### Patience is a virtue

1. *Therefore it is a moral habit:*

(a) This is the term used to describe a disposition of soul by means of which it will not depart from good because of difficulties in the way.

(b) To use St Augustine's words, patience is that virtue by which we support evils with equanimity, that is, without being worried by sadness, so that we shall not abandon good by which we can reach higher things.

2. *The object of patience:*

This is sadness, in so far as it tends to separate a man from his pursuit of good. It is caused by some evil.

(a) It is the disposition of soul to face evils in such a way that the soul is not depressed or discouraged by them;

(b) lack of patience is not merely shouting, harsh words or gestures; sadness, melancholy, discouragement can also be signs of the lack of it, especially in spiritual souls;

(c) it overcomes sadness, which can do us harm.

### A study of patience

1. *A very necessary virtue:*

So as to live in grace and so as to advance in virtue, because the trials and tribulations are many;

2. *It presents the following elements:*

(a) An adjusting of values into a hierarchy:

The patient man knows how to classify things, the higher and the lower are arranged in their right proportion; he does not judge to be an evil that which is not an evil; the lack of some inferior good does not disturb him; he is capable of carrying any cross which he cannot put away from him without letting it spoil his love or the doing of his duty.



(b) The consciousness of our condition as creatures:

- i. he knows that he is nothing and can do nothing without God;
- ii. from this comes the conviction that things will turn out rather to the choice of God than our own, when he likes, not when we desire.
- iii. we can put all our energies into a thing, but it will ultimately depend on God whether it is a success or not.

(c) An unshakable tenacity of purpose in the pursuit of good:

He is always in the breach, because he knows that in God's mind time and success are very relative things and do not really count.

### Patience and the interior life

1. The patient man obviously needs a deep interior spirituality; only thus can he remain united to God.
2. He also needs to cultivate humility, so as to be able to overcome apparent failures and humiliations and to consider himself at all times as one of God's creatures.
3. Above all, he needs to cultivate the three theological virtues; patience is the fruit of faith, hope and charity.

(a) Faith:

Which proves to us that our God is also the Lord of time; the only one who rules every moment; that we must place in his hands all success or failure alike; we have to believe in the possibility of success, even when, from the human point of view, there is no hope of it; we must work for the kingdom of God even when it seems a vain waste of time.

(b) Hope:

Which does not know discouragement, not even when it has to wait a long time; which withstands all trials for him to whom nothing is impossible or difficult.

(c) Love:

Which loves the will of God above all things else and which will never argue with the Lord or abandon the task of working for him. The special aspect of patience which is called tenacity is an effect of love, that love which, according to the apostle, endures all things, believes all things, waits for all things, resists all things.

C: It is by endurance that you will secure possession  
of your souls (Luke 21. 19)

1. *Discouragement, a form of impatience:*

We have already mentioned the fact that not only certain violent manifestations of anger, etc., are movements of impatience, but also discouragement and sadness.

(a) From the definition of patience we can see that, when a soul is dominated by sadness and almost paralysed by it, then it lacks patience.

(b) This is common in souls which desire perfection; they want to run before they can walk, arrive quickly at the goal; they become saddened when they see that, in spite of all their efforts, they still commit the same faults.

(c) Sadness can lead to apathy at times.

2. *It is also a common thing in the apostolate:*

(a) He who gives himself to the service of his neighbour in order to lead him to God longs to see the fruit of his labour; if souls do not respond then he can easily be saddened and stop working.

(b) The sinner who is converted to God and desires to amend his life can also fall into this fault of impatience. He does not like to repeat in his confessions those sins which he so ardently desires to correct, and at times he believes that, because of these continued falls, salvation is not for him.

## When and how God wills

1. Against all these evils there is one basic principle which has to be learnt: it is one which is the sublime rule of patience and without it that virtue will be impossible or at least difficult to practise. The fruit of labours will come when and how God wills.

(a) Impatience is usually a hidden form of pride, although it is hard for us to admit it;

(b) because if a Christian allows himself to be led away by it, then it is a sign that he has forgotten his complete dependence on God in all things, and most of all in spiritual things.

2. In the light of this principle we can understand certain things which happen in the lives of most Christians and most of all in those who are seeking perfection or working in the active apostolate.

(a) There are some works which demand all our attention and effort:

i. our own perfection and that of others, the demands of justice, the spread of the true faith, the progress of those souls especially commended to our care, etc. ;

ii. we can never apply ourselves to these works with too much intensity.

(b) With great patience and absolute dependence on God, we shall give ourselves to these tasks humbly, without allowing ourselves to be discouraged or saddened if the ideal we have before us be not realized. It is not we who must lay down the day and the hour when the triumph will come.

3. *More hi the concrete:*

## (a) Interior progress:

- i. if one feels the call of God to sanctity, then without doubt one must listen to it and give oneself completely to it, like the apostles;
- ii. this does not mean that the full perfection of the soul must take place at once; the usual thing is for it to be a slow process and God does not proceed by leaps and bounds, normally;
- iii. it will be a usual thing then that, in spite of our desires and efforts, there will be falls and imperfections. We must learn how to make use of them. We must see them as God sees them and humbly try to correct them gently;
- iv. from all this patience is born. To be a saint is to hand oneself over to God. To know how to wait quietly for the right moment of the realization of the work of our sanctity is ven' important.

## (b) The life of the apostolate:

- i. we may say something similar about this; beginners in this field think, in their zeal, that they will transform the place or people among whom they work and conquer the souls of those whom they attend ;
- ii. patience is also ven' necessary here;
- iii. it is essential to remember that apostolic labour should be preceded by a moment of silence; the example of Christ, who lived quietly in Nazareth for thirty years in preparation for three years public life ;
- iv. even more necessary is the patience which is prepared to await a slow growth in the vineyard of the Lord, remembering that neither he who plants nor he who waters is really important, but only God, who gives the increase.

It is by endurance that you will ensure  
possession of your souls

1. *The most usual interpretation of this text:*

By means of this abandonment to the arms of divine providence, we shall save our souls. That is, we shall triumph over the enemies who are always trying to lead us into sin.

2. *Another interpretation is that by patience we shall attain perfection:*

- (a) By patience we attain a dominion over the soul, over all our actions and all things that come to us from without ;
- (b) it is an external manifestation of our interior abandonment and intimate union with God. By being patient we allow God to work in our souls as he pleases and we are always intimately united to him. This is holiness; intimate union with God.



## D : Unity in the Spirit

### The social aspect of religion

1. The chief religious error from the sixteenth century to our own day has been the belief that religion is a personal affair between man and God. Any attempt to regulate the economic and social activities of man by means of the application of moral religious principles was looked upon as an interference of religion in the realm of business.

2. The Church, on the other hand, has always insisted that religion is not merely a personal relationship between man and God, but also a social one, because how can a million men love God unless they have love one for another ?

(a) Religion also includes the mutual relations between those men who love God. We cannot love God unless we love our fellow men, and we cannot love our fellow men without loving God.

(b) From the point of view of the supernatural life the common love for God our Father implies the natural relations between adopted sons, and it is this brotherhood of adopted sons which makes up the mystical body of Christ.

### Our vocation

1. *It is certainly and above all personal sanctification:*

(a) Not in isolation, but inside the mystical body of Christ;

(b) therefore we must all be one, we must love one another—the object of the petition in the prayer of our Lord at the Last Supper.

2. St Paul, in this part of his epistle read today, is certainly talking about this social aspect of our vocation, the mutual union in the Spirit, which is, at the same time, union in love.

### Division and quarrels among Christians

1. *It is surprising:*

(a) we notice brother against brother; family quarrels, institutions against other institutions, etc. ;

(b) there are criticisms, envy, etc., especially, we might say, among spiritual souls.

2. These sins against the mystical body, because they destroy its unity, are common in good people.

### Unity

i. There is nothing so contrary to the true spirit of Christianity as this lack of unity. The Christian is a member of Christ; just as our members form one body, so we in Christ. This should be a union of activity, mutual help, etc.

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2. There are seven foundations for this unity mentioned by the apostle in today's epistle :

- (a) union of the body of the Church ;
- (b) given life by the same spirit;
- (c) one hope,
- (d) one Lord—Jesus Christ;
- (e) one faith;
- (f) one baptism;
- (g) one common Father—God.

3. We may add, to confirm this idea of Christian unity, the unity between us and the Pope, our bishop and our parish priest.

### Humility, meekness, and patience

i. These are means to attain this unity, or are, rather, those virtues which remove the obstacles to it.

2. *To achieve it all rivalries, dissensions, envy, etc., must disappear:*

(a) Just as different kinds of wood, if they be dry, can be lit and form one single fire, so it is with Christian unity; but if the wood be damp, then there is no possibility of lighting it. If the dampness of passions impedes the unity of the Church, then that body of Christ is disrupted, torn.

(b) We each have our own personal defects ; there is no one who has not got them. We must take them into consideration, then, but we must also know how to face up to them and remove them.

3. *That is why the virtues pointed out by the Apostle are so important:*

(a) Humility removes self-love ; from this is born comprehension of others :

- i. when there is excessive self-love we are easily hurt, feel ourselves despised, etc. ;
- ii. then comes rash judgement of others;
- iii. remedy for all this—humility, through it we know how to take up a sensible attitude towards others and towards ourselves;
- iv. what happens in our case also happens in the lives of others; our best intentions are misunderstood.

(b) Meekness and patience make us put up with the faults of others; this is not merely a negative thing, but positive toleration of others.

### Love and union in the spirit

1. The Holy Ghost, the soul of the Church, unites us all in a firm spiritual bond.

2. The Holy Spirit is love; where love reigns there must also be unity.

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(a) A man who loves easily forgets self and fixes his heart and mind on God. God is love and as such he communicates himself to us.

(b) He who loves thinks of nothing but giving himself and communicating himself.

3. This is our way of life according to our vocation; to give ourselves for the sake of our brethren to live in the greatest possible union and love.

### III. THE GOSPEL

## A: Jesus, the Master and Teacher

1. *The scene:*

Incarnate wisdom face to face with the wisdom of the doctors of Israel.

2. *Two questions and one reply:*

(a) The first is the question put by human wisdom to divine; what is the first commandment of the Law ?

- i. he does not ask in order to know the truth, but to tempt God ;
- ii. divine wisdom gives a perfect and complete answer—love is the synthesis of the law.

(b) The second is the question put by divine wisdom to human :  
What think ye of Christ ? Whose son is he ?

Human wisdom is silent; they had the answer, given them by God, but they tried to give a human reply. We must answer God in his own words.

## A constant fight

1. The whole of the Gospel shows us this constant struggle of divine wisdom against the human.

2. We see it in the case of the Jewish religious problem of the woman taken in adultery (John 8. 3-11).

(a) According to the law such a one should be stoned to death;  
they present the case to Jesus;

(b) mercy urges the divine wisdom to confound his enemies; the law may be kept, but let him throw the first stone who is without sin. But he cannot approve of the sin all the same; therefore, Go, sin no more !

### 3. A juridical case (Matt. 22. 15-22):

(a) Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not? If he were the true Messias, according to their ideas, he should free his people from the Roman yoke; he surely could not, therefore, approve of paying tribute to the oppressors?



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(b) If he said it was not to be paid then he was inciting the people against Rome and they could accuse him before the authorities.

(c) But Jesus has not come to solve social-political problems; he replies that they shall give to Caesar what is his and to God what belongs to him. He then calls those hypocrites who have proposed the question to him.

4. *A case of theology and exegesis* (Matt. 22. 23-33);

(a) The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the body, put up to him the case of the seven brothers who had contracted marriage with the same woman.

(b) Jesus answers by pointing out that they did not understand the Scriptures, and that heaven was not like earth; there will be no marriage nor giving in marriage in the future life.

5. *Often he obliged his enemies to refute themselves:*

In the parables of the two sons (Matt. 21. 28-32) and the evil tenants of the vineyard (Matt. 21.33-46) he forces them to pronounce sentence against themselves.

A wisdom which penetrated the secrets of the heart

1. He told Nathanael that he knew certain secret things about him and they must have been so difficult to know that Nathanael admits that Christ is the Son of God and king of Israel (John 1. 42).

2. He knows the intimate life of the Samaritan woman.

3. He knew the thoughts of his apostles—especially on the occasion when they had been disputing about who should be the greater in the kingdom (Luke 9. 46-8).

4. He knows the thoughts and machinations of his enemies (Luke 6. 6-n).

5. He knows from the beginning that among the twelve there is a traitor (John 6. 65).

B: Christ, the Victor

The triumph of Christ

1. We see it in this scene in the temple court—he alone is victor, his tempters are silenced.

2. He puts emphasis on the triumph when he quotes to them Ps. 109: Sit at my right hand until I make thy enemy thy footstool.

Psalms 109 and 2

Both these psalms sing the triumph of the Messias, and both coincide in certain elements which history has seen fulfilled exactly.

1. *In both there is talk about his enemies^ powerful men who rise up against him :*

(a) Thou art to bear rule in the midst of thy enemies (Ps. 109. 2). What means this turmoil among the nations? Why do the peoples cherish vain dreams ? See how the kings of the earth stand in array, how its rulers make common cause, against the Lord, and against the King he has anointed ... (Ps. 2. 1-2).

(b) Christ has always had powerful enemies, until the present day when half the world is organized against him;

(c) there is practically no powerful man who has not felt the need to rise up against Christ;

(d) the apparent motives may have been earthly, but in the end it is to do harm to the doctrine of Christ.

2. *In neither of the psalms is the triumph predicted as being immediate:*

In general, the victory of Christ is not a rapid one; he himself said that unless the seed die it cannot bring forth fruit, and there is nothing so slow as the death of a seed.

(a) As we visit our cemeteries who, without faith, would believe in the victory of Christ over death ?

(b) Anyone who sees how the world is given over to sin and to the devil and hell, how can he believe in the triumph of Christ and the number of souls he has rescued ?

3. *After the Ascension:*

(a) The triumph of Christ in his mystical Body:

St Augustine repeats this constantly; it is Christ who is persecuted in his followers;

(b) the victory over the Jews:

Not immediate—the struggle lasted many centuries;

(c) over the Gentiles:

Again it was and is a slow and a delicate fight;

(d) conquest of heresies:

i. *they appeared from the first moment*; they attracted to their ranks the vain, the scientific minds, the reformers, the zealous;

ii. *not a rapid victory either*—little by little, and without noise the victory was won by dissolution rather than by force.

(e) victory over armed violence:

Again it was a slow and a long struggle- some died in exile, like Hildebrand, while their persecutors laughed—and also died. The answer—God's hand is here.

### The days are difficult

1. There are times when the good people allow themselves to be deceived, just as they killed the apostles thinking that they were doing a service to God.
2. Sustain our faith, even when we cannot see the triumph of your Church.
3. Increase our strength, as if we were to see your victory now; but also give us patience, so that we may await your will (Matt. 21. 44).

### C: The First Commandment

#### 1. *The first of all:*

- (a) Christ has replied to the doctor of the law; the first commandment is that of the love of God.
- (b) Let us see the reason for this primacy.

#### 2. *Because it is the basis of all the others:*

- (a) All the commandments are reduced to two; love of the neighbour and love of God.
  - i. the obligation to love our neighbour comes from that of loving God ;
  - ii. all the rest of the commandments are based on this one and take their binding force from it.
- (b) It is the foundation of all virtue and the root of perfection.
  - i. The apostle tells us that we must be founded and rooted in charity; and that charity is the bond of perfection.
  - ii. It is the root of our perfection in so far as perfection consists in the sharing of God's life within us. The continued development of charity within us is the way to imitate our supreme model, God.

#### 3. *Because it is the most necessary:*

- (a) St Paul (1 Cor. 13) has written a complete eulogy of charity in all its forms.
- (b) There he explains to us that nothing we do is of any use except in so far as our actions are prompted by charity or in some way influenced by it.
- (c) Without charity not even the greatest of the charisms are worth anything.

#### 4. *Because charity exceeds in dignity all the other virtues:*

- (a) as St Paul says, it is the greatest of the virtues ;
  - i. of all the virtues the most important are the theological ones;
  - ii. of these the most important is charity, because faith and hope will both disappear in heaven, but charity will remain as it was on earth.
- (b) Charity gives form and life to the other virtues.



(c) Charity, by making man God's friend and like unto him, places him in a position of sublime dignity.

5. *Because of its end:*

(a) All actions must have, as their final end, charity; that is why St Paul calls it the end of the law (1 Tim. 1. 5).

(b) Since the end is superior to the means which are employed to attain it, all other acts of virtue must be inferior to charity, since they are ordered to it as to their end.

6. *Because it is what God asks of us:*

(a) Christ pointed it out on this occasion and on many others.

i. God wants our heart (Prov. 23. 26); that we should love him above all things.

ii. God asks for what is most important and most intimate in man's being—his love.

(b) It could not be any other way, since he is God and we are his creatures; he cannot do anything else except demand that creatures serve him with all that they have received from him.

(c) If he speaks out so strongly it is because men had forgotten this fundamental precept—not only in his day, but in ours also.

## D: Our neighbour as ourselves

1. *Without the love of God:*

(a) It would seem at first sight to be morally impossible and even contrary to nature to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

(b) But the explanation is to be found in the gospel which puts first the love of God above all things.

i. God has willed it that our friendship and union should be based on a higher friendship; he wills that our love should be directed to him first of all and from him derive to other things.

ii. When we enter into particular unions and friendships we should make them all flow from this principle; it is true to say that no friendship can be sincere unless it be based on the love of God.

2. *Relation between the two loves:*

(a) The love of benevolence means willing good for the person we love; to love others as we love ourselves is to will for them the same good things which we will for ourselves.

(b) For that reason he who loves God with his whole heart and sincerely, can also love all men.

i. He must do so, because the love of God implies just that.

ii. He who does not love God, even though he may believe the opposite, does not love either himself or others; his love will not be pure, sincere or truly cordial; we cannot trust it. It will always be egoistic.

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3. *Inordinate love of self:*

(a) This intimate affection for oneself is the line of mediation, the dividing wall between hearts; it is this by means of which each one shuts himself up in his own held of limited interests and says, with Cain, Am I my brother's keeper ?

(b) Our self-love prevents us from loving our neighbour as we ought.

(c) The law requires that we love him as we love ourselves, because both by nature and by grace, the neighbour is like us, one of us, ourselves in fact.

4. *A moral impossibility:*

(a) There is not, nor will there be, any man capable of loving his neighbour as himself who has not first loved God more than himself.

(b) To love our neighbour as ourselves we must first of all stop loving ourselves :

i. this can only be accomplished when there is an object so perfect, so wonderful, so elevated that it absorbs all our love and obliges us to hand ourselves over to it without reserve.

ii. God is the only one who is in that position; all other things are on the same level as we are or even below us.

(c) Therefore true love for our neighbour is necessarily based on the love of God and goes hand in hand with it.

5. *God in all friendship:*

(a) Love of God is the necessary foundation of all social life between men; from this principle should derive all particular friendships, which will never be so firm or so inviolable than when God is between them and in them.

(b) Jonathan and David were united in this way, and that is why the latter calls their friendship a pact, because it had been made with the mediation of God, who would be both a witness to it and also its defender.

i. the world has never seen a friendship like that one ; a throne came between them but was unable to separate them ; a friendship made under the eyes of God can have no deceit in it or falsehood.

ii. when they had to separate, the two of them wept, but we are told that David wept more. Why ? Because he was the more holy of the two, loved God more and therefore loved Jonathan more (1 Kings 20. 41).

6. *Three obligations of charity:*

(a) Fraternal charity is a debt we owe to one another ; what is more, it is the only Christian debt, according to Paul (Rom. 13. 8).

(b) It has three conditions which are indicated in those words of Christ: Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you :

i. we can never pay it sufficiently;



ii. it is not enough to pay it, we must demand that they ask it of us;

iii. if our neighbour does not give way before our help then we must go to God in prayer.

## E: Love of the neighbour

### A commandment very like the first

#### 1. *Jesus says so:*

(a) He wishes to link these two loves, that of God and that of the neighbour; the one can never exist without the other.

(b) We can never claim that we love God if we do not love our neighbour. St John says that such a love is a lie (1 John 4. 20).

#### 2. *From its likeness to the former comes its excellence:*

We love our neighbour for and in God.

(a) The two objects are, as it were, united in our hearts and the same virtue of charity envelops the two.

(b) Thus the love of the neighbour is as necessary as the love of God; all the rest is useless unless there be charity.

## Motives for the love of our neighbour

We must love our neighbour as ourselves because:

#### 1. *We have the same nature:*

We have the same origin, the same family tree, the same object in view, the same destiny.

#### 2. *We are sons of God:*

By nature we have impressed on us the image of God; by grace we are adopted sons of God; this makes us all of God's family.

#### 3. *We have the same redemption:*

(a) Christ bought us all at the same price—that of his blood;

(b) he has come to make himself our Head and us all his members;

(c) there is a double motive of love; we have been redeemed together by the same blood of Christ, and when we hate our brother it is a most loved member of our family whom we hate, the body to which we belong.

#### 4. *The same destiny:*

(a) God does not wish anyone to be lost (Matt. 18. 14), he wills all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2. 4) and attain heaven.

(b) We must, therefore, love our neighbour who is united with us in the glory of heaven; love him to the extent of helping him to attain it so far as we can.



5. *It is the command of Christ:*

- (a) it is not a counsel, but a strict command;
- (b) at the Last Supper, as if there were nothing else on his mind: A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another.

6. *His example:*

- (a) as I have loved you—that is his command;
- (b) he gave himself for us—as we must give ourselves.

7. *The doctrine of his apostles—the same as his:*

- (a) Paul—love one another in charity' (Gal. 5. 13);
- (b) John insists on it time and time again.

## The measure of our love for our neighbour

*As ourselves:*

- (a) Love of the neighbour for his own good not for my own.
- (b) This love includes:
  - i. no offence against him in thought, word or deed,
  - ii. desire good for him and do good to him,
  - iii. pardon for the faults he commits against us.

## F: Motives for the love of God

### The value of love

- i. The creator is the only one who knows the true value of things created, because he made them all and gave them their measure, weight and perfection.
  - (a) He praises the faith of Peter, but says that it came from the Father (Matt. 16. 17). He praises the faith of the centurion and rewards it with a miracle (Luke 7.9).
  - (b) But on one occasion he spoke to us of a virtue which, of itself, is capable of winning pardon for a multitude of sins and the friendship of God, who takes the part of the sinner against her enemies. Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much (Luke 7. 47).
- 2. The Lord, who knows the value of each virtuous act, has given the greatest value to the act of love.
- 3. This is really the theme of the Gospel—to be saved, one thing alone is necessary, to love.

### Two loves

1. *I can love a thing:*

- (a) Because it is useful to me, I like it; thus I love health or even the bitter medicine which will give it back to me.
- (b) I can love a thing because it is good in itself, even though it is not useful to me at this moment—I love my dead mother in this way.

i. The first type of love is less perfect, because the motive is my own interest; the second is more perfect because I am moved by the interest of the person loved.

ii. In the first case I love for myself in the second I give myself to the beloved.

2. *Can I love God in these two ways ?*

Yes, we should not exclude God from anything that is love.

(a) We should love God because in him we find our happiness :

i. This is not to lower him in our eyes: to love him because he is good for me, is not that a praise of God ? Will the sun be offended because we desire its heat?

ii. God is not offended because we desire him; he longs for us to do so.

iii. This desire to possess God with the idea that he will help us to attain it, is the virtue of hope.

(b) but there is a more perfect love:

It consists in loving God because he is the most perfect of all beings, the ocean of perfection.

(c) We may begin by thinking of God as our most perfect possession, but soon we will see that he is goodness itself and we will love him like that, without any thought of our own advantage. The motives are that he is our Lord, that he is ours.

### The three motives for charity

1. *To love him because he is God:*

(a) Man's heart loves good ; God is infinite good, and the source of all good.

(b) Creatures teach us this, in so far as they tell us that they cannot fill our hearts completely.

2. *To love him because he is the Lord:*

(a) He has created us, preserved us, because our love is a debt we owe to him.

(b) The greatest benefit we have received from him is that of redemption.

(c) Think of the cross—God made man for you.

3. *To love him because he is ours:*

(a) We possess him in ourselves by grace; he dwells in us.

(b) He will be ours in glory when our happiness will be to possess him.

### God our last end

1. Love is my centre of gravity and I am pulled towards it inevitably.

(a) It would be a wonderful thing to see a stone suspended in mid-air; I am like that, because I do not tend to God as I should, with all the force of my being;

(b) our example should be St Paul, who would not allow anything to separate him from the love of Christ, not tribulations, sorrows, not life—or death (Rom. 8. 35).

2. Just as the clouds prevent us from seeing the sun so does this flesh of ours prevent us from seeing the goodness of God.

(a) Some of the saints knew how to tear aside this veil—and they died of love;

(b) we might ask God to give us a little light to see him by and so to serve him with all our hearts.

### G: To love God above all things

#### A logical precept

1. The catechism is definite—we must love God above all things, and the Scripture tells us that this means with all our heart, soul and mind.

2. The supreme Good must be loved like this, it is logical and right that it should be so.

3. But from childhood we have been aware of the objection which is raised against this; goodness does not move us of itself; there are many good things which I do not love or desire, because I do not know them. No; it moves us because it is near and dear to us, and there are many things of this kind which are nearer to me than God. How can I love God more than my parents, my children, my husband or wife?

#### The solution

It is an easy one if we realize what love means and if we study the facts as they appear to us.

i. When we talk about love we mean an act of the will by which we wish to attain to or unite ourselves with someone. We do not mean the passions, affections or sentiments.

(a) The senses are very impressed by what they see and touch, more than by something which is hidden from them; for that reason it is possible for them to be greatly moved by something which the will does not want.

(b) When it is a case of the love of God the senses can remain cold and unimpressed; while the will can understand that God is its supreme Good and can wish to attain him.



2. If the will feels this about God, that he is a good far superior to all others, one which will bring to us the supreme happiness and whose loss means utter destruction, then it can and should decide to follow after him, even though all else may be opposed to that; even though the emotions and the senses may incline it towards the love of other and inferior things.
3. To love God does not mean feeling more emotion in that love than in any other; rather it implies loving him to the extent of being prepared to lose all other things except God.

### Life offers us many examples of this kind of love

1. Soldiers in battle know what it means to risk their lives for their country, even though they may lose their homes, families and other loves.
2. You can see the same thing in a novice going into a convent or a candidate for the priesthood.
3. The same in a martyr going to his death; the fear might make us think that he loved life more than anything else; his actions in dying make us believe that he loves God more than life.
4. The love which is above all others is not known by sentiments and feelings, but by the actions of the one who loves; the love of God above all things means being ready to lose all things rather than offend God.

### The means to attain this love

1. God must be loved with the whole heart, that is, sweetly and not by force; with all our strength, that is strongly, lest force should separate us from his love (St Bernard).

2. *But how are we to attain this sweetness and this strength ?*

#### (a) According to Cardinal Hugo:

i. *by remembering the pardon of our sins:* the greatest favour he has done me is to rescue me from eternal death; from now onwards I must choose between his mercy which has saved me and creatures who can lead me into sin.

ii. *I must remember all his other favours:* all which surround me I have from him; is any of them worth losing the Giver of them all ?

iii. *taste the sweetness of heaven before our time.* Think of it, remember it, and remind ourselves that all this he is willing to give to those who love him—but only to those who love him. He will not force us, yet the choice should be a simple one.

#### (b) To love him with all our strength:

i. *put aside our fears:* there is no danger which can overcome us because in the moment of peril he is with us to help us.

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ii. *love work and effort*: love is both demonstrated and grows through action. It is as strong as death (Gant. 8. 6).

iii. *not to reject suffering and pain*: it is one thing to throw oneself into danger with temerity, quite another to shrink from it when it comes our way.

3. *These means can be reduced to*:

(a) a series of considerations on the part of the mind to make us see that God is supremely lovable, above all things else;

(b) a series of small acts of the will by which we train ourselves to love him above all things ;

(c) do the ordinary things of daily life as well as possible and be satisfied with this day—the present moment. There is no need to imagine heroism or great temptations, for which we have not as yet the grace to win the victory. Just the ordinary daily routine is enough for love.

## H: Qualities and effects of the love of God

### Qualities

1. *Christ, our model*:

We should study and imitate him.

2. *Charity must be supernatural*:

(a) We are not talking about any kind of love, but one which is essentially divine.

(b) It must be supernatural in its object—God as creator and Father.

(c) Christ shows us this in his agony and at every moment by turning to his Father in heaven.

(d) In all the crises of my life I must turn to God at every moment and repeat the prayer Christ taught me—Our Father. . . .

(e) It must be supernatural because it is infused by God, through the Holy Spirit who is given to us (Rom. 5. 5).

(f) Our task is to remove obstacles and to ask for love ; God who is always at the door of our hearts, knocking for us to open to him, will not turn a deaf ear to this petition.

3. *Charity must be pure—disinterested*:

(a) What personal interest did Christ seek in living among us, save the glory' of his Father ?

(b) My love for God must not seek temporal favours; what I seek is eternal.

4. *It must be a love greater than that which I have for other things*:

Christ loved unto death—even the death of the Cross.

5. *Love must be active:*

(a) This is the love of God—to keep his commandments (1 John 5.3). I come to do thy will, O God (Heb. 10. 7).

(b) It must seek the good of the beloved and of the friends of the beloved. My love must seek God in his commandments and in my neighbour.

6. *It must persevere:*

(a) Christ did not allow himself to be discouraged by persecution, hatred, not even by the thought of death.

(b) He knew how to hope, even in death—If I be lifted up, I shall draw all men to myself (John 12. 32).

## The effects of love

1. It unites us to God; he who loves, lives in God and God in him (1 John 4. 16).

2. It pardons all sin; God does not allow himself to be beaten in loving, he is generous and as soon as he sees that he is loved, he wipes out the memory of faults committed against himself.

3. It gives us the strength to fight for our own sanctification and salvation, from the mere doing of our duty to the most heroic acts of self-denial.

4. It makes the service of God pleasing to us, because what is done from love is done with gladness.

5. It merits a special providence on the part of our Father, who sees to it that all things accumulate for our good (Rom. 8. 28).

6. It makes us imitate God (Eph. 5. 1-2).

7. It makes us live in Christ, who is our life.

8. It is the only true love of self—to love oneself is to hate oneself, but to love God implies true love of self (St Augustine).

9. It unites us to our fellow men, as brothers in Christ and fellow members of his Body.

## I: The ministry of reconciliation

i. *This is a meditation or sermon for priests:*

But it is also useful for laymen to realize in what this ministry really consists.

(a) Love restores order in place of disorder; it frees us from slavery and restores us to full friendship with God, our Father (prodigal son).

(b) But it must be a true reconciliation.



2. *True reconciliation:*

(a) We have a ministry of reconciliation, says St Paul, because Christ has confided it to us (2 Cor. 5.18).

(b) It is the preparation for love; love prepares its own way through the mediation of the Good Shepherd.

(c) There are wolves in sheep's clothing, it is true, but there are also quite a number of sheep in wolves' clothing; men who appear much worse than they really are. It is the love of a good shepherd which can discover the good hidden beneath an evil cloak.

(d) Our first attitude then should be one of kindness and love towards all those who are outside the fold, even though their external appearance may be that of wolves!

3. *The charity of Christ:*

It must 'press' us—that is, urge us on all the time.

(a) There are no limits to charity, no obstacles which it cannot overcome.

(b) Love is not love that alters where it alteration finds. . . .

(c) Love perseveres until death if necessary, without hesitation or fear.

4. *Social applications:*

(a) The full application of the first commandment would be an immediate solution to many human problems and would prepare the way for other solutions to further problems.

(b) One of the worst things about modern social struggles is that they are true struggles—fights.

i. *there are vested interests at stake*—a true class hatred;

ii. *between persons who have at least been baptized*—members of Christ, even if they do not realize it.

(c) For this reason the priest must both preach and practice this commandment, well meditated and understood:

i. he must never forget his mission as an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor. 5. 20),

ii. our mission as priests is not to one class of persons or to another, but to all men, for the reconciliation of all and union of all in Christ,

iii. the greatest mission of the priest is that of love for all in Christ.

*Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

THE PARALYTIC AT CAPHARNAUM

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: i Corinthians i. 4-8    Gospel: Matthew 9. 1-8. (cf. Mark  
2. 1-12, Luke 5. 17-26)

Texts concerning the forgiveness of sins

1. *Only God can forgive sin:*

He is true to his promise of mercy a thousand times over; shame or sin or guilt is none but he forgives **it**. . . Ex. 34. 7.

It was I, ever I, that must be blotting out thy offences, effacing the memory of thy sins. Isaías 43. 25.

There will be no need for neighbour to teach neighbour, or brother to teach brother, the knowledge of the Lord; all will know me, from the highest to the lowest. I will pardon their wrong-doing; I will not remember their sins any more. Jer. 31, 34.

All the guilt that offends me purged away, all the wrong and despite they did me forgiven. Jer. 33. 8.

Was there ever such a God, so ready to forgive sins, to overlook faults, among the scattered remnants of his chosen race? Mich. 7.18.

2. *The confession of sins in Scripture:*

If man or woman commits any of these wrongs mankind is prone to commit, and incurs guilt by neglecting the Lord's commandment, they must make confession of it, and pay back the sum, with a fifth part added besides, to the wronged party. Num. 5. 6-7.

David, when he saw how the angel was smiting the people down, had said to the Lord, The sin is mine, the fault is mine; these poor sheep of mine, what wrong have they done? Nay, turn thy hand against me, and my own father's race. 2 Kings 24. 17.

Fall full well I may; misery clouds my view; I am ever ready to publish my guilt, ever anxious over my sin. Ps. 37. 18-19.

Never shalt thou thrive by keeping sin hidden; confess it and leave it if thou wouldst find pardon. Prov. 28. 13.

3. *The remission of sins by Christ:*

A leper, so we thought of him, a man God had smitten and brought low; and all the while it was for our sins he was wounded, it was guilt of ours crushed him down; on him the punishment fell that

brought us peace, by his bruises we were healed. Strayed sheep all of us, each following his own path; and God laid on his shoulders our guilt, the guilt of us all. Isaias 53. 4-6.

And she will bear a son, whom thou shalt call Jesus, for he is to save his people from their sins. Matt. 1. 21.

And so, I tell thee, if great sins have been forgiven her, she has also greatly loved. He loves little, who has little forgiven him. Then he said to her, Thy sins are forgiven. Luke 7. 47-48.

So it was written, he told them, and so it was fitting that Christ should suffer and should rise again from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in  
• his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24. 46-47.

And Jesus said to him, I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise. Luke 23.43.

Next day, John saw Jesus coming towards him ; and he said, Look, this is the Lamb of God ; look, this is he who takes away the sin of the world. John 1. 29.

Here is news for you then, brethren; remission of your sins is offered to you through him. There are claims from which you could not be acquitted by the law of Moses, and whoever believes in Jesus is quit of all these. Acts 13. 38-39.

It will be reckoned virtue in us, if we believe in God as having raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead ; handed over to death for our sins, and raised to life for our justification. Rom. 4. 24-25.

This is what some of you once were; but now you have been washed clean, now you have been sanctified, now you have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of the God we serve. 1 Cor. 6. 11.

Christ never knew sin, and God made him into sin for us, so that we might be turned into the holiness of God. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Cf. Gal. 1-4-

In the Son of God, in his blood, we find the redemption that sets us free from our sins. Col. 1.14. Cf. 1 John 3.5.

... the glory of our saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, to ransom us from all our guilt, a people set apart for himself, ambitious of noble deeds. Tit. 2. 13-14.

#### 4. *How Christ handed over this power:*

I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Matt. 16. 19. Cf. 18. 18.

With that he breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit; when you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven, when you hold them bound, they are held bound. John 20. 22-23.



## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

## I. LITURGICAL

Liturgists say that, from this Sunday, the Church tries to prepare us for the last Sunday after Pentecost with its Gospel describing the Last Judgement. This preparation consists in constant references to the coming of the Lord. For Parsch this theme is especially to be found in today's Mass and in practically every one of the formulas of it. Thus, when the Church asks God to give peace to those who hope in him, the plea is for eternal happiness in heaven for which we long and whose glory has been sung so highly by the prophecies concerning the return of the Lord to this earth.

I. *The Mass:*

The Epistle, if we see it in this light, contains two parts or aspects; one looks back in thanksgiving for benefits received and the other looks towards Christ, from whom we hope for that confirmation in good which is eternal life with him. On the day of his coming may he find us ready. The Gradual, taken from one of the captivity psalms, can easily be applied to the Church, captive in this world, but eagerly awaiting the coming of her Lord. However, Schuster, more objective in his comments, points out that formerly this Sunday had no special Mass, on account of the ordinations, even though one had to be composed soon for those churches outside Rome where there were no ordinations held.

Parsch sees in the Introit an explanation of the reward promised, but again Schuster, using the words of Augustine, points out that: We should not promise ourselves something which the Gospel has not promised us. God gives us no security with regard to temporal life, the goods of this world, not even to his Son or to the apostles. Therefore in vain do we hope unconditionally for that type of goods which God does not grant without some relation to the salvation of our soul, which is, if we count on divine grace, the one thing we should hope for. This hope should be firm, resting on the goodness of God.

Hence, in the Collect we ask for God's grace, without which we can do nothing, and the Epistle, apart from giving thanks for those things we have received, goes on to show us how to become richer, by uniting ourselves to Christ.

2. *The Offertory:*

Both writers stress its beauty, not merely from the point of view of the ancient music or literary merit, but also because of its contents. The text has been reduced to one verse, but in the old missals the whole psalm was used. The vision of God is not proper to this life;

in fact most authors say that it has never been granted to anyone in this life—except to Christ. Our mortal nature is not adapted to such a grace, which implies the actual and permanent possession of the supreme Good. But faith comes to our aid, and by drawing a veil over the face of God, so that we are not dazzled by the glories of his countenance, still allows its rays to light our path. All this so as not to take away the reward of merit which comes from the use of free will.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: i Corinthians I. 4-8

#### i. *Texts:*

(a) I give thanks to my God continually . . .

Paul commonly begins his letters by giving thanks for the benefits his readers have received and for the virtues which they manifest. In this case the special reasons for this thanksgiving are given in verses 4-7, which ends by calling to witness the day of judgement itself which will prove Paul right in his optimism concerning the new converts to Christianity. The grace he is thankful for on this occasion is that which his readers have received from Christ, the source of them all.

(b) that you have become rich, **through him** . . .

Christ is the source of all riches, although here St Paul makes mention only of some, such as the power of eloquence, and knowledge of ever}' sort. Who knows if there is not a touch of sarcasm in this, because we do know that the love of the Corinthians for eloquent speeches gave Paul a great deal of difficulty, and one of the purposes of this letter was to correct the divisions which had sprung up in that city because some of the Christians preferred the polished oratory of Apollo to that of Paul himself.

(c) so fully has the message of Christ established itself among you . . .

The riches of grace poured out on the Corinthians has been in proportion to the firmness of the preaching of Paul and his companions, as also to the sincere way it was received. The Corinthians, in spite of their defects, have not been content just to hear the word of God, but have taken it to their hearts, where they taste the consolations it brings with it. Nevertheless, the gospel, both in the understanding and in the heart, is a gift of God.

(d) there is no gift in which you are still lacking

An abundance of grace must receive a like reply from the receiver; the proof that this has been given is shown by the riches they have received. This and nothing less should be hoped for from those who

are waiting in hope for the day of the Lord. This coming, in Pauline language, is the final coming at the day of judgement, when Christ will be surrounded by his followers after having revealed all secrets of the heart. However, the words do not denote that Paul believed this day to be very near at hand. He always says that he does not know when that day will come, which is what Christ himself said about it. But he, like all the early Christians, always kept it before their eyes as a norm of conduct and also with the desire for the complete triumph of Christianity.

(e) He will strengthen your resolution to the last. . .

Christ will not fail those who put their hope in him; we can hope for final perseverance and the grace from him to be found blameless when he comes. If he has called us, he will give us all we need to reply to that call.

## 2. *Applications:*

We also have been called to the kingdom of God, and if we differ in any way from the Corinthians, it lies in the fact that we were called when our eyes had not yet opened to the light of day, but the eyes of the soul were opened by our baptism and by the faith it brings with it. We should give the same thanks as St Paul and correspond with the same generosity which he asks of the Corinthians.

There have been many calls all through our lives and we owe him thanks for them; also repentance for the times we have not made good use of his graces.

Lastly, let us never forget the day of judgement and truth.

## B: The Gospel: Matthew 9. 1-8

### 1. *Occasion and history:*

The cure of the paralytic comes in the three Synoptics. St Matthew, who has less chronological interest than the others, puts it immediately after the crossing of the Sea of Galilee after the inhabitants of the city had asked our Lord to leave. St Mark and Luke put it later, when the authorities in Judaea had already begun to annoy our Lord, that is, after the period of preaching in Galilee which ended in Capharnaum, where Christ sought a rest. St Luke makes this scene one of five controversies with the Pharisees. The special thing about St Mark's account is the life he gives to the episode.

### 2. *Texts:*

(a) his own city . . .

Capharnaum received this name, not because our Lord was born there, but because he made it the centre of his preaching and the starting point of so many of his journeys.



## (b) a man who was palsied and bed-ridden:

A type of paralysis of the motor nerves, very common everywhere and most difficult to cure. It can have various causes and take several forms, from complete paralysis to partial uselessness of one or more limbs, usually the lower.

St Matthew's account must be completed by that of St Mark; according to the latter the multitude completely blocked the doorway of the house in which our Lord was, as they did on several occasions. We may remember how they told the two blind men at the gates of Jericho to be quiet. They came from several districts to hear our Lord's preaching, and among them were Pharisees from Judaea and even from Jerusalem, who followed our Lord as they had done John the Baptist, to see if they could catch him out in anything.

At this point some men appear carrying a paralytic on a stretcher. Since they could not reach our Lord in the normal manner they climbed up the outside stairway which was a common feature of Jewish houses, on to the flat roof. It was easy to gain entry this way, because the roof would be the usual Palestinian one of branches covered with mud which, when dry, formed sufficient protection against the elements. It was a simple matter to break a hole in this without any danger to those down below. We can imagine the surprise of those in the room when they saw the hole appear in the roof, slowly being widened until, supported by ropes, the stretcher was lowered to the very feet of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus at once tells the sick man to have courage.

Those who carried the sick man give us a real lesson in charity. We must have compassion on those unfortunate people, share their sufferings and difficulties, encourage them, make their sufferings easier and lead them to Jesus.

Paralysis is usually looked upon as a symbol of sin, but it can also represent tepidity—that laziness of the soul which makes it incapable of moving along the road to perfection, deprives it of the use of its faculties, and eventually, if the soul is not made aware of the danger, leaves it incurable. The remedies are faith made stronger by meditation and prayer; a good confession and purpose of amendment; shake off laziness and remind ourselves that life was meant to be a struggle against difficulties.

The paralytic and his friends give us an example; they longed to come to Christ, but they did not rest at that; instead they worked hard to attain their desire. So must we.

## (c) Thy sins are forgiven . . .

There was a Jewish belief that illness was the result of sin (cf. John 9. i ff.). This is not always so, although on some occasions Christ did warn the person he had cured to sin no more, lest some worse evil should happen to him.

In this case Christ sees a double necessity, that of the soul and that of the body, and he sets out to remedy them both, beginning with the more important.

(d) He is talking blasphemously:

There can be no doubt that Jesus meant just what he said, that he had power to forgive sins, and the Jews understood it that way too. They realized that no one save God can forgive sins, therefore what Jesus has said implies the use of a divine prerogative, it was in effect to call himself God, which was blasphemy and punishable by death.

(e) Jesus read their minds . . .

Not the first time, by any means. On this occasion it is the first miracle in the scene, as Chrysostom points out. Then he goes on to put the famous question to them: Which command is more lightly given? Obviously, both require the power of God, but one—the forgiving of sin—is an invisible effect, which cannot be checked physically, the other is visible and obvious.

(f) And now, to convince you that the son of man has authority to forgive sins . . .

The link is obvious. If I cure this man I have the power from God to do so; and since God will not set his seal on a lie, the former statement that his sins are forgiven is also true.

Christ, the only Son of God, has this power as man and uses it as our Redeemer and Mediator. He exercised it personally on earth and promised it to his Church in the person of Peter (Matt. 16. 19) and to the other apostles (Matt. 18. 18). He confirmed this and handed it over on the occasion of the first apparition after his resurrection (John 20. 23).

There are many considerations which follow' from the thought of this great power given to men. We might think of just one—the ease with which we can obtain the pardon of our sins. How grateful we should be to God for that gift of the sacrament of penance.

### 3. *The historical truth of the miracle:*

There is no need nowadays to insist too much on this point, because rationalism, the once great opponent of the historicity of the miracles of Christ, is now dead to all intents and purposes. In this case we must not forget that there was a doctor present on the scene, St Luke. However, there is one thing which needs to be added, since it has been said that the paralytic was hysterical and the cure was a psychological one, due to the encouragement Christ gave him by saying that his sins were forgiven. On this point Dr Knurr says: It is not true to say that the cases of paralysis mentioned in the Gospel were hysterical ones, but even if they were we may still ask, are such cases cured rapidly and infallibly? To cure an hysterical

paralysis takes a long time, months, even years, and then the cure is not certain. Sudden cures are deceptive and there are frequent relapses. . . . Charcot himself advised doctors not to think of themselves as miracle workers, even in the cases of paralysis of a definitely psychic origin, lest their reputation should suffer (*Christus Medicus*, pp. 15 and 19).

Dr Ryle (*The Hibbert Journal*, 1907, p. 580) points out that cases of hysterical paralysis are rare, while those of nervous lesion origin are frequent. Secondly, hysteria is more common in young women; thirdly that, in true paralysis, once the nerves and fibres are injured it is as absurd to think that any sudden shock can bring about a cure as it is to think of adding to a man's stature.

#### 4. *The relative truth of the miracle:*

This is of greater importance. Miracles are proofs of the divine mission of the one who works them or, at least, of the divine origin of the truths he teaches. If this connection does exist then it is clear that the doctrine is of God, otherwise the Almighty is setting his seal on falsehood—and that he cannot do, as supreme Truth itself.

To know if this relation exists it is normally sufficient that the two things should go hand in hand, preaching a doctrine and miracles; the people who hear the one and see the other can draw the conclusion for themselves. But the whole thing becomes more important when the preacher deliberately says that he will work a miracle in proof of his teaching. If the miracle follows, then the teaching is absolutely certain. That is what happened in this case.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

#### Sickness

(Summary' of the teaching in two of his letters to St Olympias, when the Doctor of the Church was in exile.)

#### *Patience in sickness:*

When the body is consumed with labours and weakened by sickness; when it is not looked after by doctors and medicines, with good food and all that it requires, then remember that dangers and difficulties are thereby increased. Therefore I beg you to consult with doctors and learned men and make use of medicine to cure those ills.... Do not worry at the thought that I must pass another winter here, because this year I am better and with more strength than last year. If you make use of those precautions to cure yourself and to look after your health, you will feel much better too.



But you tell me that the cause of your sickness is sadness. Why then do you ask me for more letters if you have not plucked any fruit from the others I sent you to encourage you and lighten your sadness? On the contrary, you have allowed yourself to be swamped by waves of sadness to such an extent that you say you would like to leave this world. Do you not know what a great reward is promised to those who receive illness with thankful hearts? Have I not told you this a thousand times by word and by letter?...

What can I say to you? There is nothing, Olympias, nothing at all which can compare with patience in suffering illness; that is the queen of the virtues, their crown.

#### (a) The merit of patience:

This good is so great for those who bear illness with courage and generosity that, if it should happen to a man who is guilty of the gravest crimes, in a moment it can free him from them. For the just it is a brilliant crown, more radiant than the sun, and the best of all possible expiations for those who have sinned. . . . Paul, casting in their faces a crime which is the most serious of all, the sacrilege of those who partake unworthily of the table of the Lord, and having pointed out that those who do such a thing are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, he goes on to say: That is why many of your number Avant strength and health, and not a few have died (1 Cor. ii. 30). Then, to give them the consolation that such punishment will not last for ever he says: If we recognized our own fault we should not incur these judgements; as it is, the Lord judges us and chastises us, so that we may not incur, as this world incurs, damnation (w. 31-32).

#### (b) Illness is not laziness:

Do not think that, because you are retired from the Aworld and confined to your bed, that you are living a life Avhich is useless and idle. You are enduring greater and more difficult trials than those Avho are being dragged to the scaffold by their executioners, quartered, martyred and slain Avith great agony, because this bitter illness is a terrible interior and domestic enemy for you. In such case, take care to look after your body and not to desire death, because that is not what you should do. That is Avhy Paul told Timothy to look after his health—but that is enough about sickness.

## II. ST AMBROSE

### Seeking for the Lord

(Some extracts from his treatise on FzrgzzzzTy, in which he points out that we must seek Christ as eagerly as did the crowds in Palestine.)

joS      EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1. *Christ cures in every place and at any time:*

From the beginnings of the Church the crowds sought Jesus. Why? Because as the gospel tells us, laying hands on them, they were cured. There is no special time for this healing, no special place. The medicine is applied everywhere and at any time. Mary is blessed by the angel within her own home, David is anointed as prophet at home; Jesus cures in all places. On the road, in houses, in the desert. On the road she was cured who touched the hem of his garments; he raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue in his house; a multitude of the sick were cured in the desert. . . . I can see an order in all this; at the setting of the sun the sick are taken to Jesus; with the dawn it is the crowd that seeks him. Rightly so; for when, except by day, shall we seek Christ? He who walks in the light does not separate himself from the Lord. When it was still night the groans of the sick could be heard; but once the day dawns it is the faith of the people and the joy of those who are in health, that what is written may be fulfilled (Ps. 39. 6).

2. *Let us open to him:*

Have you learnt now where you are to seek Christ ? . . . He comes at your invitation, whether you are eating or drinking, if you call on Christ, there he is saying to you: Eat my bread and drink my wine (Prov. 9. 5); and also in your sleep. He knocks at the door. Frequently he comes and puts his hand in through the window; but he does not always come, or for all—but only for that soul which can say: At night I have taken off my tunic (Cant. 5. 3). In the night of this life it is necessary to take off the clothing of this worldly life, just as the Lord, in order to triumph over the powers of this world, put off his mortal flesh for you. . . . When divine grace comes, carnal love diminishes, as does the external activity of the soul. Get up, and open to his knock; if you open to him he will enter, accompanied by the Father. And not only once he has entered will he give you his gift, but even before he comes he sends it to you. The soul is as yet troubled, as yet groping round the walls of the house, seeking the door by which Christ may enter. She has not yet put off the yoke of the flesh or left the prison of the body. Christ is, as yet, still knocking at the door and the soul says: I rose up to let him in; but my hands dripped ever with myrrh; still with the choicest myrrh my fingers were slipper}', as I caught the latch. And what myrrh is this which is distilled from the hands of the soul, if not that which the good Nicodemus offered to Christ. He was found worthy to hear first of all the words of regeneration, who carried the mixture of myrrh and aloes, over a hundred pounds weight, and poured them over the body of the dead Christ; is it not the perfect odour of the faith that which is carried? This is the perfume which the soul gives forth who begins to open to Christ, the perfume of the

tomb of Christ, in the belief that his body did not suffer corruption, not knowing the smell of death, but rose with the perfume of that eternal ever-green life.

### III. ST AUGUSTINE

#### Christ, the sick man and the Pharisees

(Sermon 47 is perfectly adapted to this Sunday; there are the three elements in it, the sick man, the scribes and Pharisees, the miracle together with the argument our Lord had with them about

##### 1. *Mercy—we are the Lord's flock:*

The words we have just sung (Ez. 34. 16) are a compendium of our faith, because we are the Lord's sheep, his flock, and we do not address him in vain with our sighs and tears *λνlī056* flock we are. We have said many times, let us weep before the Lord, because he made us and is our Lord, our God. Let no one despair of being heard, because we have already recalled the obligation on the part of God to hear our pleas since he is our God and has made us. . . . Human shepherds, even the owners of the flocks, did not create their sheep, did not form the flocks which they pasture; on the contrary, our God, because he is our God and creator, made for himself the sheep he feeds. They were not made by one and fed by another; he feeds them who created them.

Let us weep, then, before him; it is certain that we are in a good place while we live in the world; but when we please him in the land of the living, then all tears will be wiped from our eyes and we shall sing his praises because he has rescued us from the land of death, has freed our feet from the fall and our eyes from their tears. Yes, *λνε* shall please him in the land of the living because it has been such a difficult thing to do it in the land of the dead. Here we must please him by begging his mercy, and, as far as we can, keep free from sin; if we cannot do that then at least we can confess it and ask his pardon.

##### 2. *The joy of belonging to the flock of the Lord:*

Having confessed, in this hymn, that we are his flock, let us hear what he has to say to us as his sheep.

In the former reading he spoke to the shepherds, today to his sheep. I heard the former with fear in my heart; but what of today? Can I listen in peace and you in fear and trembling? On no account. Because, although we are shepherds, the shepherd hears with fear in his heart, not merely what is said to him, but also what is said to the sheep. If he heard that with tranquillity it would be a sign that he was not interested in them. But there is something else, and I



confess it to you; we are two persons really, on the one hand we are Christians and on the other we are leaders. So far as we are leaders, we are shepherds, but as Christians we are also sheep, just as you are. Let the Lord speak to the shepherds or to the sheep—it is all the same, we listen to him in fear.

3. *The day of pardon is here:*

He gives us one warning—that we must listen to the voice of the shepherd. There is still time to hear it, because he has not yet assumed the office of judge. He speaks, but he is also silent. He says: Too long have I been dumb—but shall I always be so? (Isaias 42. 14). And why have you been dumb? Because as yet you have not said to one: Come, ye blessed of my Father, and to another: Depart from me into everlasting fire. . . . In spite of being the creator and we the creatures, he the immortal and we the mortal, he the invisible one and we the visible, he did not wish us to be ignorant of the last sentence. He does not wish to condemn us, even though he says: I condemn; he does not wish to wound us, even though he wounds.

His mercy is great, so is his meekness, but we must not misuse his patience so as to increase our malice; he puts up with our sins so long as we do not increase that burden through malice. . . . These sins of ours which he still endures, still pardons, both show his mercy and our guilt. Are you ignorant of the fact that God's patience calls you to repentance? We are still in the hour of his mercy and his patience.

4. *Be merciful in order to obtain mercy:*

I mean to do justice, the Lord God says, between the beasts themselves. . . . Having a judge like this one, whom nothing can predispose in favour of one side or the other, the best thing is to behave ourselves in such a way that we need not fear the final judgement. Does the grain fear to be taken to the granary? Quite the opposite. Do the sheep fear to be placed on the right hand? No; time passes slowly for them here until that hour comes. For that reason they say, with all sincerity, Thy kingdom come. Only the evil tremble at those words and their tongues stumble over them. Why do you say: Thy kingdom come? It is coming, and what will your state be? Live in such a way that you can say these words sincerely and in peace.

And if your conscience is aware of some stain of sin, then in the same prayer you will find the remedy; Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. God wanted you to be a debtor and wanted you to have debtors too. In sin, you became an enemy of God; but look and see if you have an enemy too; pardon him, and you will be pardoned. What you do, and you may be a sinner, he also will do who knows no sin. If you, O man, know not how to pardon, forgetting your own frailty, what will happen to you, who judge so calmly as if you had never sinned?

## THE FATHERS

### 5. *Confess your sins:*

Let us keep our conscience clear and should there be any sin on it, let us confess it, getting in before his sentence, so that he cannot get in before us. After our confession there will be no revenge on his part, provided we do not repeat the evil. Get in before him, because it is certain that he will come. You will be lost if you do not long for that which is to come, whether you wish it or not. Just as he knew when he was to be judged he knows when you are to be judged too. He will come, and be careful how you are at that moment. Today the sin exists; but confession also. Let us renounce the sin today, therefore, and today it will be pardoned, today it will be forgiven. Do not say: God delays his coming. Do not delay in the use of the remedy.

Is there anything on your soul which causes you anxiety? If there were a stone in your house which offended your sight, you would command that it should be removed, especially if you were expecting an important guest. When you call on God, then, and invoke him, how can you hope that he will come to you if you have not made clean the place where you are to receive him? Is it so difficult to remove from your heart that which you yourself have placed there? Call him, then, that he may make it clean, then invite him to enter. That which you will have to do eventually, do it now, because he speaks to you to warn you and then keeps silent so as not to judge you.

### 6. *The patience of God:*

And what of you, my flock? I mean to do justice, the Lord God says, among the beasts themselves, give redress against the rams and the buck-goats (Ez. 34. 17). What are they doing, these sheep in the flock of the Lord? The pastures are the same for all, the streams the same, yet there are the goats on the left hand, remaining in the flock for the time being, to exercise the patience of the sheep as they do that of the shepherd—God. Only he may separate them and put the ones on his left and the others on his right hand. He is silent now, and will you dare to speak? And about what do you wish to speak? On that about which he is silent. You wish to speak of revenge, not correction. He does not yet separate, but you would like to do so. He who sowed tolerates the mixture of good and bad. If you want the corn to be clean before the harvest, then be afraid lest you too be weeded out.

### 7. *Man's impatience:*

The servants, annoyed on seeing the cockle and sad at the thought that it was mixed with the good seed, said: Didst thou not sow good seed? Whence, therefore, the cockle? He explained whence it has come, but he would not allow them to root it up before the time. Although the servants were horrified at its being there, they sought counsel and advice from their Lord. They did not like to see it



among the corn, but they knew they were only servants and that, if they had dared to root it up on their own, they would be counted among the bad weeds. They awaited orders from their Lord and sought the commands of their king. The condition of the fields is one thing, quite another the tranquillity of the husbandman. He puts up with you, and perhaps that is why you were born, to be tolerated. If you have always been good, then have mercy; if you have at times been bad, then do not forget it.

And where is the man who has always been good ? It would be easier for God to find some evil in you now, were he to examine you with diligence, than for you to find that you had always been good. Therefore the cockle must be tolerated in the midst of the wheat, the goats among the sheep. The time will come for the gathering of the harvest and the separation of both. At the moment God demands patience from us, and to that he invites us, saying: If I wished to judge at this moment, could I not do it ? And were I to do it, would I make a mistake, perhaps ? If I, whose judgements are always right and who cannot make a mistake, put off that day of judgement, you who do not know how you will be judged—do you dare to be hasty in your judgements ? Do you not see, brethren, how he did not allow those servants to pluck up the cockle, not even in the day of the harvest; instead the task was confided to the angels.

8. *To judge belongs to God alone:*

I mean to see justice done between fat beast and lean (Ez. 34. 20). I have still more to add ; we have seen what he says about trampling down the good pastures and fouling the waters; let us listen *ἡολν* to what he says about another kind of evil, and a great one at that. He alone knows who are sheep and who are goats in whose hands it lies through his predestination. Now, since all bear the sign of Christ, and all approach the grace of God, you think that you are one of the sheep; but perhaps he knows you for one of the goats. However, like a sheep, listen to these words: I mean to see justice done between fat beast and lean. Thrust back with side and shoulder, gored with the horn, all the weaker of them have been driven away. Who is there who does not understand and fear his words ? We weep for many sheep who wander far from the fold, but what about those shoulders and sides, those horns which drove them forth ? Only the stronger sheep could do that ; and who are they ? Those who presume in their strength. Those who glory in their holiness; those who think that they alone are just have divided the flock and cast the sheep forth. Men who are bold in their pushings, because they are not weighed down by the fear of God; their horns uplifted in their pride.

Are you, perhaps, the angel destined to pluck out the cockle ? *You* cannot be, because the time of the harvest has not yet arrived and



not merely you, but anyone who attempted it would be a false angel. He who chose the reapers has also chosen the time. . . . And when the time does come and the reapers are sent to the harvest I do not know where you will be found, among the clean grain to be taken to the granary or among the cockle which has to be tied into bundles to burn.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

##### 1. *Final impenitence* :

St Augustine, in his *De Verbis Domini*, says that the blasphemy or sin against the Holy Spirit is final impenitence; i.e. when a man perseveres in mortal sin until death. This blasphemy is not only a matter of words, but also of works and of the heart, and not once but many times. It is said that this word, understood in this way, is against the Holy Spirit because it is against the remission of sin, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and Son. Nor did the Lord say this to the Jews as if they had sinned against the Holy Spirit, because as yet they were not finally impenitent; he warned them in this way so that they would not sin against the Holy Spirit, and in that way we must understand what is said in Mark 3. 29, where Jesus says: He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, etc., and then, adds the Evangelist, Because they said he had an unclean spirit (2-2. q. 14. a. 1. c).

##### 2. *Malice in the choice of evil*:

Others explain it in a different way, saying that there is sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit when one sins against some good which is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, to whom goodness is attributed, as is power to the Father and wisdom to the Son. Therefore they say that a sin against the Father is one of weakness; against the Son when a man sins through ignorance, and against the Holy Spirit when there is open malice, that is, by the very choice of evil. . . This can happen in two ways: (1) through the inclination of a vicious habit which is given the name of malice, and then it is the same to sin through malice as to sin against the Holy Spirit; (2) because one despises and casts aside all that could impede the choice of evil, just as hope is defeated by despair, fear by presumption, and other things of the like nature.... But all these things which impede the choice of evil are the works in us of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to sin in this way through malice is to sin against the Holy

3. *Several kinds of sin against the Holy Spirit:*

The above species are fittingly assigned to the sin against the Holy Ghost taken in the third sense, because they are distinguished in respect to the removal or contempt of those things whereby a man can be prevented from sinning through choice. These things are either on the part of God's judgement, or on the part of his gifts, or on the part of sin. For by the consideration of the divine judgement, wherein justice is accompanied with mercy, man is hindered from sinning through choice, both by hope, arising from the consideration of the mercy that pardons sins and rewards good deeds, which hope is removed by *despair* and by fear, arising from the consideration of the Divine justice that punishes sins, which fear is removed by *presumption*, when, namely, a man presumes that he can obtain glory without merits, or pardon without repentance.

God's gifts whereby we are withdrawn from sin, are two; one is the acknowledgment of the truth, against which there is *resistance of the known truth*, when, namely, a man resists the truth which he has acknowledged, in order to sin more freely: while the other is the assistance of inward grace, against which there is *envy of a brother's spiritual good*, when, namely, a man is envious, not only of his brother's person, but also of the increase of divine grace in the world.

On the part of sin, there are two things which may withdraw man therefrom; one is the inordinateness and shamefulness of the act, the consideration of which is wont to arouse man to repentance for the sin he has committed, and against this there is *impenitence*, not as denoting permanence in sin until death, in which sense it was taken above (for this would not be a special sin but a circumstance of sin), but as denoting the purpose of not repenting. The other thing is the smallness or brevity of the good which is sought in sin, according to Rom. 6. 21: What fruit had you therefore in those things, of which you are now' ashamed? The consideration of this is wont to prevent man's will from being hardened in sin, and this is removed by *obstinacy*, whereby man hardens his purpose by clinging to sin.

4. *Whether this sin can be forgiven:*

According to the various interpretations of the sin against the Holy Ghost, there are various ways in which it may be said that it cannot be forgiven. For if by the sin against the Holy Ghost we understand final impenitence, it is said to be unpardonable, since in no way is it pardoned; because the mortal sin wherein a man perseveres until death will not be forgiven in the life to come, since it was not remitted by repentance in this life.

According to the other two interpretations, it is said to be unpardonable, not as though it is nowise forgiven, but because

considered in itself, it deserves not to be pardoned; and this in two ways. First, as regards the punishment, since he who sins through ignorance or weakness deserves less punishment, whereas he who sins through certain malice can offer no excuse in alleviation of his punishment. . . . Secondly this may be taken to refer to the guilt; thus a disease is said to be incurable in respect of the nature of the disease, which removes whatever might be a means of cure, as when it takes away the power of nature or causes loathing for food and medicine, although God is able to cure such a disease. So too, the sin against the Holy Ghost is said to be unpardonable, by reason of its nature, in so far as it removes those things which are a means towards the pardon of sins. This does not, however, close the way of forgiveness and healing to an all-powerful and merciful God who, sometimes by a miracle so to speak, restores spiritual health to such men.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(Some extracts from the *Sinner's Guide* concerning the offices of charity, both positive and negative.)

#### 1. *The positive ones:*

Under this name of love there enter many other positive actions which may be included, of which these are the main ones: we should love, counsel, help, suffer, pardon and edify. . . .

Some say they love and do not go any further; others love and help with their advice, but they will not put their hands into their pockets to help others. Others love, advise and help; but they do not suffer with patience the injuries or the weakness of others, nor do they follow the advice of the apostle when he tells us that we must bear one another's burdens, and so we shall fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2). Others do suffer such things patiently, but they do not pardon them with mercy, and although within their hearts they have no hatred, they do not wish to put a good face on things. Others there are who have all this, but they do not edify their neighbour with their words and their example, one of the highest offices of charity.

#### 2. *Negative:*

There are other negative principles in which it is laid down that we should not judge others, we should not speak evil of others, we should not covet their goods nor their wives; that we should not give scandal with our words, and still less by bad example and counsel.



3. *To sum up, we should have a mother's heart towards our neighbour:*

Try to have the heart of a mother for your neighbour and then you will be able to fulfil all that we have mentioned before. See how a loving mother looks after her son, warning him of dangers, looking after him in his needs; see how she shields him in all his faults. At times she sutlers them in patience, at others she punishes them with justice, at others she dissimulates and turns a blind eye to them with prudence; because charity makes use of all these virtues as a queen and mother. See how she rejoices at his good, weeps over the evils that befall him, as if they were her own; what a great zeal she has for his honour and advantage; with what devotion she prays to God for him. . . .

4. *Motives for charity:*

(a) Our neighbours are also members of Christ:

If you ask me how can I have this sentiment for someone who is a stranger to me, I will answer you, that you must not look on your neighbour as a stranger, but as an image of God, work of his hands, as his son and as a living member of Christ....

(b) The times Christ has insisted on it:

Also I would remind you how many times Christ has insisted on the excellence of this virtue; and if you have within yourself the wish to please God then you will not let pass such a virtue which is his greatest pleasure.

(c) The bonds of the spirit should be more binding on us than those of the flesh:

See the love people have for one another when they are bound together by mere bonds of the flesh, and then be ashamed that grace cannot do more in you than nature, the union of the spirit more than that of the flesh. . . .

(d) We are one family:

All have one Father, God; one mother, the Church; one Lord, who is Christ; one faith, which is a supernatural light in which we all share and by which we are distinguished from the rest of men; one hope, which is the same inheritance of glory, in which we shall be of one mind and heart; one baptism, in which we were all adopted as sons by the Father and made brothers one of another. We have one food, which is the Blessed Sacrament of the Body of Christ, in which we are all united and made one with him, just as from many grains of wheat one loaf is made, and from many grapes one wine. Above all, we share in the one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the souls of the faithful either by faith alone or by faith and grace, animating them and keeping them all alive (Eph. 4. 4-6).

If the members of one body, even though they have different offices to perform, love each other because they are animated by the same soul, how much more should the faithful love one another, since all are animated by the same divine Spirit?

(e) The example of Christ:

Over and above this, let your eyes rest on that singular example of love which Christ gave us, and by which he loved us in a singular manner, without personal interest or because of any merit of ours. Then, strengthened by this notable example, bound by an obligation of gratitude for such a grace, you will do all you can to love your neighbour in the same way, so that thus you may fulfil perfectly that command of Christ which he gave you as he was leaving this world, when he said: This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 13. 34).

## IL ST FRANCIS DE SALES

### Rash Judgements

*{Introduction to the Devout Life, Part 3, ch. 28}*

1. *How displeasing to God are rash judgements:*

The judgements of the children of men are rash, because they are not judges one of another, and in judging they usurp the office of our Lord; they are rash, because the chief malice of sin depends on the intention and counsel of the heart, which is a hidden thing of darkness to us; they are rash, because each one has enough to do to judge himself, without undertaking to judge his neighbour. In order not to be judged ourselves it is equally necessary for us not to judge others, and to judge ourselves; for, as our Lord forbids the one, so the apostle commands the other, saying: If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. . . .

We must seek remedies for rash judgements from the sources from which they spring. There are some hearts, sour, bitter and harsh by nature, that likewise make all that they receive sour and bitter . . . never judging their neighbour except harshly and with rigour. These have great need to fall into the hands of a skilled spiritual director. . . . Some judge rashly, not from harshness, but through pride, imagining that by how much they lower the honour of others, by so much their own increases. . . . Others have not this manifest pride, but only a certain complacency in considering the imperfections of others in order the better to relish the contrary perfections, with which they imagine themselves to be endowed; and this complacency is so secret and imperceptible that without good sight we cannot discover it, and those persons themselves who suffer from it are not aware of it, unless it be pointed out to them.

Others, to justify their own conduct and to deaden the remorse of



conscience, are very ready to judge that others indulge in the sin to which they themselves are addicted, for they imagine that the multitude of offenders makes their sin less blameworthy. Many indulge in rash judgements for the sole pleasure which they take in philosophizing and conjecturing in regard to the morals and dispositions of others. . . . Others judge according to their feelings, and always think well of what they love and ill of what they hate.... In fine, fear, ambition and such like weaknesses of the spirit often contribute much towards the breeding of suspicion and rash judgements.

2. *Remedies:*

But what are the remedies ?... Drink as much as you can of the sacred wine of charity, which will free you from these evil humours which cause you to make such perverse judgements. So far is charity from going in search of evil that she fears to meet it; and when she does meet it, she turns her face away from it, and seems not to see it. ... Charity is the sovereign remedy for all ills, but especially for this. . . .

But may we never then judge our neighbour ? No, indeed, never; it is God who judges criminals in the court of justice.... To see or to know a thing is not to judge it, for judgement, at least according to the Scriptures, presupposes some little or great, some true or apparent difficulty, which must be decided ; wherefore it is said that: They that believe not are already judged, because there is no doubt about their damnation. It is not therefore wrong to doubt our neighbour, no, for we are not forbidden to doubt, but to judge. ... In fine, those who keep careful watch over their consciences are rarely subject to rash judgements ... it is the part of the futile soul to busy' herself with examining the lives of others.

### m. ST JOHN EUDES

1. *The bad confessor:*

On the contrary, a bad confessor, one who is negligent, ignorant, imprudent, weak or a flatterer is a pest in the Church of God. He is not a missionary, but an envoy of the devil; he is not a doctor of heaven but of hell. The devil loves to have several types of officials, just as God does. God has his patriarchs, so has the devil, and they are the heretics. God has his prophets, his apostles, his martyrs, his virgins. The devil also has his false prophets, his false apostles, his false martyrs and virgins, and his doctors too, like the scribes and Pharisees in the time of Christ, who crucified him, as do those who teach truths against the faith and the sanctity of Christian customs. What is a bad confessor? He is not a divine judge who applies God's justice to men, but a Pilate, who delivers sentence of death against Christ himself, bringing death to souls.



He is not a mediator of God but of the devil, working for his interests and his business. He is not a faithful dispenser, but one who wastes the graces of God, one who profanes his ministry, his sacraments. He is not a saviour, but a devil, one who does the work of the devil, sending souls to their destruction. Far from being God, who makes the divine life flower in souls, he is a devil, bringing the devil's life to souls. He fills heaven and earth with demons, men who live like demons, because he fomented in them all kinds of vice.

This is not a question of some earthly judgement in which there is question of a house, a piece of land, or even human life itself; this is a question of an eternal kingdom, immortal glory, infinite happiness, the immense riches of paradise—in a word, of the salvation of a soul, or its condemnation.

Therefore be careful to apply yourselves to this work according to its merits. See if you have the qualities necessary to undertake it and to fulfil it according to the demands it makes on us. If you have not these qualities which a good confessor should have, if you do not observe that which you should observe, then the absolutions you give will only serve for further grounds for your condemnation.

### *2. Charity in the confessional:*

I know one confessor in particular who, having been selected by divine mercy to work for the conversion of sinners, and being troubled one day by the doubt as to how he should act in order to draw them to God, whether to use kindness or harshness, or a mixture of the two, decided to address himself to the Virgin Mary in prayer. He implored her, in all humility, to ask her Son to inspire him and give him some instructions on this point. While he was still in this state of prayer, our Lady sent him a messenger, who appeared to him and spoke thus: I am going to communicate to you, dear brother, a holy and beautiful instruction which our Mother has sent you as to the manner in which you should conduct yourself towards sinners, both in public and in private, in order to convert them. Say to your brother this: when he goes into the pulpit let him take with him all the canons, all the weapons possible, especially that terrible one of the divine words, in order to fight sin in general and destroy it utterly in the souls of his hearers; but when he has to speak privately to some sinner in order to convert him, then he should do so with gentleness, kindness, patience and charity.

### *3. The sinner is a sick man:*

Yes, you must look on and treat those who are in sin like poor sick people, covered with ulcers and wounds, whom it is necessary to treat with the greatest compassion, not with indignation; like a wise doctor . . . encouraging him to reveal his wounds, excusing him as far as possible, having compassion on him, trying to feel as he feels and talking to him with great kindness.

## jio EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Once the wounds have been revealed it is necessary to wash them with hot wine in order to remove the dirt and corruption, i.e. we have to open our hearts to him, show him a great affection, talking to him with charity and cordiality, making him see that he is really loved and that the only thing we seek is God's glory and his salvation. We should show him the ardent love of God and his great mercy with sinners, especially those who are converted to him; how he forgave Peter, Paul, Augustine, and Magdalen, the good thief and so many others. When we wish, it is an easy thing to attain salvation, with the grace of God, which is offered to all.

### 4. *Never harsh:*

Afterwards we have to take oil and with a feather anoint the wounds of the sick man. The feather is the sacred Scripture, on which we must base all that we say. The oil is the example of God, of Christ, of his holy Mother and of all the saints, which must be put before him in various ways according to the matter being treated. For example, with one who will not forgive his enemies or be reconciled to them, we should put before him the example of God's charity, of Christ and Mary, in the way they forgave their enemies.

Above all you must be very careful never to use vinegar, i.e. never be harsh. Always be kind and patient, even with those who rise up in anger against you, nay, even if they ill-treat and abuse you.

If all this does no good, then exhort him that he should ask God earnestly and beg the grace and strength to overcome himself and be converted, or at least let him see that you will pray for him to God for that purpose. Above all, bring him to pray to our Lady as a most efficacious means of touching the heart of the sinner and converting him. This is the best and most effective method for converting sinners, and if after all this they remain obstinate, at least you will have given glory to God and will be as pleasing to him as if you had converted them.

## IV. TILMANN PESCH, S.J.

### Conscience and confession

(Some extracts from his book, *La Filosofia Cristiana de la Vida*, Gili, 1913.)

#### I. *Confession:*

The most significant expression of the care we have for our consciences is confession, as well as being a great incentive and proof. When the care of his conscience is not a capital interest in a man's life, he has no time for confession as it has always been practised in the Church of God; but one who is seriously concerned about the state of his conscience will see in confession something which is of the greatest benefit to him.



Confession is in keeping with human nature, since that nature urges any man who is troubled at heart to unburden himself to some faithful friend.

It is in keeping with the thought of sin, according to that statement of Seneca; he who, in shame, recognizes that he is a sinner is very near to not being a sinner.

Confession is in keeping with Christianity, which is the kingdom of justice and mercy. Justice demands man's collaboration—man by his free will co-operated in the sin, and therefore it is only just that he should co-operate in the reconciliation also by his free will. He sinned through pride, it is only right that he should obtain forgiveness through humility.

The divine justice could have imposed most severe penances, such as Christ, in the generosity of his love, imposed on himself for us. But from us he demands only one penance, which serves for our consolation and happiness—the bitter but advantageous medicine of confession.

Christ gave to his apostles, as the Scriptures assure us, supreme judicial power; but there is no possibility of distinguishing between absolving and not absolving unless the very penitents themselves are obliged to declare sincerely the state of their souls....

## 2. *Objections against confession:*

It has been said that confession is difficult. Of course it is difficult for the proud, but the humble accept it with good will. That is why fervent Christians use it more frequently than is laid down by law.

It has been said that it is a burden. That is true, as we all know, both priests and laymen. But then, it never was a pastime.

It has been said that an examination of conscience is impossible. But why is it impossible to examine one's conscience in a reasonable way? The obligation of confession is reduced to mortal sins, and these soon spring to the memory with very little effort.

It has been said that confession is shameful. That is not quite true. There is shame in sin, but not in the confession of it. Courage is needed to confront an enemy in battle; but there is more courage needed to humble oneself on one's knees in the confessional and admit that one is a sinner. The sinner who, with a sturdy courage, does penance, offers to heaven something which gives the angels more joy than ninety-nine just who do not need penance.

## V. ALFRED WILSON, C.P.

### Pardon and Peace

(Some extracts from the book *Pardon and Peace*, chap. 1. The book is one of the best ever written in the English language on the subject of the sacrament of penance and should be better known.)



### 3'2 EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

#### 1. *A load off your mind:*

On the merely human psychological plane, Confession is amply justified and its necessity proved. But Confession is more than a clinic of psycho-therapy; it is also a sacrament of Divine Mercy, guaranteeing the pardon of God as well as the pardon of society. It is in no sense an arbitrary imposition, for even the hardest part of it, the telling of our sins, is medicinal not punitive, and is inspired by mercy, understanding and a desire to help. The medicine is certainly hard to take and not at all palatable, but it is medicine all the same! A kind Lord could not let us off scot-free, it would not be good for us. In this world, however, all penance is designed to be remedial and is never merely vindictive.

Jesus obliged us to confess our sins for our own sake rather than for his. He took the institution of Confession, which is a natural necessity' and safeguard, facilitated it and elevated it, raising it to the dignity' of a sacrament. He made the inevitably difficult task of confessing as easy as it possibly could be made. We confess in secret, to any priest we choose; if we like, to one who does not know and will possibly never see us again. We confess in secret to a man who is bound to secrecy. We confess, moreover, to a man who is trained not merely to listen with tenderness and sympathy, but to instruct, advise and heal.

In the Sacrament of Penance Christ himself is the real priest. There, in his capacity of Divine Physician, he forgives sin, pours grace into our souls, removes the traces of past sins, and gives us a title to actual graces in future difficulties.

Confession is simply a Hospital of Souls, where the Good Samaritan, through the instrumentality of priests, goes about binding up wounds and pouring in oil and wine; a hospital where the Divine Physician displays his healing art. Object to such a Sacrament as being too fantastically good to be true, but please don't object to it as a bugbear.

I don't think the majority of Catholics realize how much they owe to the Sacrament of Penance. One of the greatest Viennese psychologists, a man bitterly anti-Catholic, had the honesty to admit that, among his cases of serious psychological disorder, he had never had a genuinely practising Catholic.

Regular confession prevents our worries and fear and remorse from degenerating into neurosis and melancholia. Test from your own experience what might have happened to you but for Confession. There are few who certainly retain their baptismal innocence; few who have not, at some time or other, committed mortal sin or had serious doubt about having committed it. Remember that experience and the aftermath — your worry, misery, joylessness; the joy of others merely accentuated your misery and seemed almost to mock you; praise and approval rubbed in your unworthiness. You

went to Confession, you put yourself in contact with the Precious Blood, 'one drop of which would cleanse a thousand worlds of sin', you almost felt the 'oil of gladness' being poured into your soul. You came out a changed being. You were free, you were pure, once more a child of God. Others noticed the change and wondered what had happened to you. You simply had to indulge your feelings, you bounded along and almost danced for joy, you felt that you could have jumped over the moon and gladly played the clown in any harlequin show. He has restored unto you the joy of your salvation.

Recall those times of huge relief. That relief is being given daily to thousands. God forbid that any Catholic should come to look on such a Sacrament as a harsh necessity or a cruel imposition.

What would have happened to us if we had been forced to go through life without that relief, without a chance of starting again? What morbid neurotics we might have been! Throughout our lives Confession has been safeguarding us against perils that only recently have we begun fully to appreciate.

Let us make full use of this Divine Sacrament. Let us strive to gain a fuller appreciation of its value and a greater gratitude for its help. Is it not a magnificent proof of the wisdom and love and tenderness of the Good Samaritan, the Divine Physician of Souls? Only on the day of Judgement shall we know all that we owe to this Sacrament of Mercy; the joy and consolation irradiated from it, the oil of gladness poured into the souls of men; the sins prevented, the weak encouraged, the spiritually dead restored to life. Was it not just like Jesus to institute, in his infinite mercy, this Sacrament of pardon, consolation and hope? An imposition? It is a Sacrament of Mercy for which we can never be sufficiently grateful.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### Meeting with Christ

Glory to God who has given such power to men

1. The words of today's Gospel—thy sins are forgiven—remind us of those other words of Christ to his apostles: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them (John 20. 23).
2. Thinking of these words we can join with the multitude in today's gospel story and give thanks to God who has given such power to men. With even more reason, perhaps, because Christ was God made man, while the apostles and their successors are mere men.



### Christ and sin

i. That Christ does forgive and that he gives the power to do so to men is one of the glorious aspects of his triumph. He won this victory by his passion and death.

(a) But this triumphal aspect supposes another which is painful. God does not pardon easily; he demands satisfaction. If man sinned, he must also pay for his sin, for this it was necessary to find one who, although a man, still was superior to the ordinary powers of men and of human nature.

(b) That is why the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. He took on himself our sins, suffering things which, from the human point of view, it would have been impossible for anyone to suffer.

2. These are the two great mysteries which are joined in Christ; that of justice and that of mercy.

(a) By justice he suffers for sin; by mercy he pardons them and communicates this power to his Church.

(b) Christ was the senant of justice—for that he came into the world, took the flesh of a slave, on his shoulders our sins; he suffered torments and shed all his blood for us on the cross.

(c) He also sen'ed mercy; that is why he said that he had come to seek sinners, not the just. All who felt that they were burdened and in labour could go to him, etc. From this came the great scenes of the Magdalen, the woman in adultery, and the good thief.

### Confession—a meeting with Christ

I. In Christ justice and mercy meet and embrace one another. Because he first of all suffered for the sins of men, the Father gave all judgement into his hands, that all might honour him (John 5. 22).

(a) According to these words, as many times as we go before the tribunal of the Son so that he may judge us, so many times do we pay homage to both the Son and the Father.

(b) What a sublime thing confession is; nothing less than a meeting with Christ and homage paid to his humanity. If he received full power to judge, then it is impossible to be forgiven unless we come into contact with that sacred Humanity.

(c) The penances of the Old Law, that return to God of which the psalms speak so eloquently, have now been raised to the dignity of a sacrament; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven. . . .

2. The bishop says these same words over the newly-ordained priest at his ordination.

### The priest, representative of Christ

I. He has the power, because Christ obtained it for him by his passion and death.



2. To fall at the feet of a priest and tell him our sins may cost us an effort, because it is something so intimate in our lives, but it is also something great, because it is homage paid to Christ, to his power, justice and mercy. It is a meeting with Christ as real as that of the Magdalen.

### Before the Church

1. *The priest represents Christ, in whose name he acts:*

But he also represents the Church. This idea makes the sacrament even greater.

(a) A Christian belongs to the Church, which is not merely a society, but also a body, with relations and communication of one member with the others. All the acts of any one of the members has a social repercussion.

i. Sin implies this too; each sin is an atrophy in one of the members of this body;

ii. if all members of the body were saints there is no doubt that the action of Christ in the world would be more realistic, more thrusting; sinners are a drag on the body, impeding the full life of Christ in the Church.

(b) If sin, then, harms the whole Church it is right that confession should be made to the Church. This was almost certainly the idea behind the public penances and also the public confessions which used to be a feature of the early Church.

(c) If we wish to find some reminder of it now we can do so in the *Confiteor* of the Mass.

2. *It is a great grace to be judged now:*

We must look on the tribunal of penance as a tribunal of grace and of mercy.

(a) It is not a humiliation really to confess our sins to one who, man like ourselves, still represents God;

(b) it is an honour for us, because through it we are united to Christ.

3. *There is something splendid about confession:*

Some of that splendour which shines in the scenes of the last judgement as Christ told us about them; that day, so terrible for the sinner, will be a day of glory for the just and for all those who have given glory to God for his mercy (Rom. 15. 9).

(a) The glory of each individual will differ, as St Paul tells us:

i. That of those who have not sinned or have sinned little will not be like that of those who have sinned much but to whom much has been forgiven;

ii. sinners will feel no shame for their past sins on that day, nor will they try to hide those wounds, now healed; on the

contrary, they will shine with a special glory' as the wounds of Christ by which they were healed ;

iii. those who confess their sins today will also confess them then, but in a different sense; not to show their guilt but their glory, praise and adoration of the mercy of God.

(b) For that reason the exhortation today, on which this Gospel of pardon is read, should be directed towards getting souls to go to confession, where they will meet Christ. It is a meeting of mercy, a secure guarantee that the other meeting with him on the last day will also be a happy one.

## II. THE GOSPEL

### A: The city of Jesus

#### Caphamaum

#### I. *Jesus came to his own city:*

These words of the Gospel seem to form a contrast to his own statement that the Son of Man had no place to lay his head. Yet he did choose Caphamaum instead of Nazareth :

(a) he takes refuge in it when he is cast out of Nazareth (Matt. 13. 53, Mark 6.1-6);

(b) he dwelt there—possibly in Peter's house ;

(c) from there he goes on his rounds of preaching ;

(d) and once he has finished he returns there;

(e) in Caphamaum he pays taxes (Matt. 17. 26);

(f) the city' and its surroundings were the scenes of his frequent preaching:

i. in the synagogue on the sabbath ;

ii. in the house where he lived;

iii. on the shores of the lake (Mark 2. 13);

iv. in the surrounding mountains, where some of his most beautiful discourses were pronounced.

(g) City of his miracles (Mark 1. 23; Mark 3. 1), where he gave life to the centurion's servant, and to the poor fisherman their miraculous catch.

#### 2. *Reasons for this selection :*

Caphamaum was a city which, from the political and geographical point of view, provided him with a stage for his preaching.

(a) A flourishing city, wishing to be raised up to the heavens (Matt. 11. 23);

(b) a commercial centre of great importance, with the caravans from Damascus, etc. ;

(c) with an important post for the tax gatherers, one of whom was converted to Christ;

(d) a Roman garrison with a centurion at its head, and one who gets on well with the Jews (Luke 7. 4-5). It is a cosmopolitan city, in which the relations between Jew and Gentile were good.

### A city accursed

1. Contrast the economy of Christ and his election of this city with the words he pronounced against it and the harsh punishment to which it will be submitted.

2. Capharnaum did not correspond to all the care Jesus took and his affection for it. For which reason, in sorrow, he had to threaten it.

And thou, Capharnaum, dost thou hope to be lifted up as high as heaven ? Thou shalt fall low as hell. Sodom itself, if the miracles done in thee had been done there, might have stood to this day. And I say this, that it shall go less hard with the country' of Sodom at the day of judgement than with thee (Matt. 11. 23-24).

3. The decadence of Capharnaum started shortly afterwards and it has not yet been rebuilt on its ruins.

### Other cities of Christ

1. Apart from Capharnaum there were other cities in the life of Christ, which he chose for some reason or other; for example: Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem.

2. *Conclusion:*

Many times in the history of the Church there have been cities and nations especially favoured by God; great preachers and saints came from them and taught them; they did not choose to listen—we have a classic example in the great Church of Africa—which is now reduced to nothing, when once it had an Augustine!

### B: The miracle and the persons concerned

As happens in so many cases, in this miracle the persons concerned in it are types which occur frequently in history.

### The paralytic

1. *The physical point of view:*

His body reminds us of the illness caused by sin.

(a) Physical pain came into the world through sin;

(b) to remind us of what sin means in the sight of God—who did not wish man to suffer and who had freed him from suffering by a special gift.

2. *It is a type of sin itself:*

(a) A soul without beauty, strength or vigour; incapable of moving or of doing any good;



(b) insensible; ears which do not hear; eyes which do not see; truth does not illuminate him nor good move him; he would like to hear; to move; but it is never more than a vague desire; he is bound to his stretcher;

(c) the power of God is needed to cure him.

3. *Let the sinner fix his eyes on Christ:*

We can easily imagine how the eyes of the sick man would be fixed on Jesus as he lay before him on the ground.

### Those who carried him

1. *Fraternal charity:*

(a) joins actions to feelings;

(b) ingenious, so as to find a means of helping, even when things seem impossible;

(c) persevering; not discouraged in the face of difficulties.

2. *A live faith:*

Without it they would not have given us the example of perseverance and courage which they did give.

3. *Prayer and intercession before Christ in favour of four brothers.*

### The Scribes and Pharisees

1. *Evil:*

(a) When we are decided in rash judgement then we see everything with an evil eye;

(b) this malice is born of envy or pride;

(c) its first step is rash judgement, then comes a train of evils.

2. *An unchristian idea:*

There is nothing less Christian than the idea that if you think evil you are probably right.

(a) It is a rash judgement that offends God, whose judicial functions we usurp;

(b) it offends our neighbour, condemned without proof, on suspicion merely;

(c) it has terrible consequences; hatred, quarrels, unjust actions, it does not correct anything, but only serves to irritate and gives rise to a feeling of injustice in our neighbour.

### Jesus

1. *God:*

(a) penetrates the secrets of hearts:

There is nothing less easily known; Jesus shows many times that he knows them intimately—this is one of them.

(b) he forgives sin:

A work exclusive to God.

- i. only the one who has been offended can forgive;
- ii. the Pharisees understand this only too well.

(c) he cures the sick man.

2. *The man:*

- (a) Christ the only hope of the sick man and his friends;
- (b) gentle and kind, have confidence, courage!
- (c) quick to cure the real evil first, that of the soul;
- (d) amiable, even when he reproves, seeking means of opening the eyes of those who persist in keeping them shut.

## The crowd

- 1. Easily moved, bursting into praise of God for the miracle they saw—they saw Christ work with disinterestedness and generosity.
- 2. There is danger that false doctrines and bad example will move them to evil—example, Good Friday.
- 3. Our care should be to counteract evil with good example.

## C: Praise of God

### Lesson of the crowd

I. *Two distinct attitudes among those who surrounded Jesus:*

- (a) The scribes and Pharisees who blasphemed in their hearts;
- (b) a multitude won over by his words and actions, breaking into praise of him.

2. *This attitude was frequent among the simple people who listened to him:*

- (a) One day it is the poor woman who praises his mother (Luke 11.27);
- (b) at other times it is the crowd, praising him even when he wishes them to keep silent (Matt. 9. 31);
- (c) on at least one occasion they wished to proclaim him king (John 6. 15);
- (d) at the time of his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem they rejoice at the song of the children;
- (e) it is true that later they would ask for his death:
  - i. it is the moment when they are swayed by evil men;
  - ii. but there will be some of them who will come down from Calvary beating their breasts (Luke 23. 48);
- (f) and on the day of Pentecost, with the conversion of over 3,000 of them, they will confirm their repentance.

### The obligation of praise

#### 1. *Man's lips are made to praise God:*

God is the creator of all things, and he wishes man to raise up his mind and heart to God in articulate praise in the name of the whole of creation.

#### 2. *He merits our praise:*

He is the only one who has infinite majesty, is worthy of infinite glory; the creator of all things, the king of ages, immortal and invisible (i Tim. 1.17).

### How God is praised

#### 1. *By thought:*

(a) The psalmist tells us: Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, let all the nations of the world do him honour. Abundant has his mercy been towards us; the Lord remains faithful to his word for ever. Ps. 116. 1-2.

(b) Here we have two main considerations for praising God; he remains ever faithful to his words;

(c) his abundant mercy, more than we will ever know in this life.

#### 2. *In words:*

(a) We have received the gift of speech from God, it should also be used in his honour;

(b) because it is the external expression of our thoughts and feelings;

(c) thus we fulfil this duty also in the sight of others, exciting them by our example.

(d) Every day there should be some vocal prayer, and where possible the liturgical prayer of the Church should be made our own—we should love to share in it.

#### 3. *By works:*

(a) Jesus asks this of us all the time, but also especially so that our good works may shine before men to such an extent that they will be urged to praise God too;

(b) we have sworn to follow him, glorifying him in our works, otherwise we shall be a scandal to others;

(c) as the first Christians glorified him, so much so that even the pagans were in admiration at them.

### Our glory is in his praise

#### 1. *In this life:*

(a) The honour of the praise is God's, the advantage is ours because we gain more than the effort it costs us;



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(b) apart from being a service we do to God, it brings us an increase in sanctifying grace, his most precious gift.

(c) It brings a heavenly flavour even to this earth.

2. *In heaven :*

When we shall share his glory with our Lady and all the saints.

## D: The crowds and Christ

### Introduction

1. The last verses of today's Gospel give us an occasion for talking about the impression produced by Christ's words and actions on the crowds who listened to him.

2. We can leave on one side the hatred and machination of the enemies of Christ.

### Extremes

Even among those who followed him, -whether it be the crowds, the disciples, or the apostles, he aroused very different types of sentiments. These very sentiments help us to know Christ better.

### Impression of fear

1. The people were accustomed to what they had learnt through their history and traditions.

(a) The whole history of the Jewish people is one of divine intervention, accompanied by majestic demonstrations of divine power.

(b) Classic example is God talking to Moses in the thunder and lightning of the mountain, while the people were afraid even to touch the sides of the mountain.

2. That is why there are occasions when, on hearing Christ and seeing some small flash of his divinity, the people are afraid.

(a) In the first miraculous catch of fish Peter and the others are afraid (Luke 5. 9) and Christ is forced to calm their fears.

(b) In today's scene the same is true of the crowd;

(c) we see it when he calmed the tempest (Mark 4. 39) and among the inhabitants of the land of the Gerasenes when they saw the destruction of the swine (Mark 5. 15-17).

(d) Sometimes even the smallest things make the most intimate friends of Jesus feel this fear; example, the transfiguration.

(e) It is usually a holy fear, as we can see from the case of the widow of Naim.

### Lack of understanding

I. One of the things which caused our Lord a good deal of suffering, this lack of understanding;

(a) Peter himself, immediately after his wonderful profession of faith, tries to persuade Christ not to die, and is told that he is a devil (Matt. 16. 23).

(b) Even his own relatives think that he is out of his mind and try to capture him ;

(c) even when he had won the victory over the Samaritan woman, he had to meet the lack of understanding of the apostles, who wondered why he talked to a woman, and above all such a one as this (John 4. 4-26).

(d) The multitude which had been in such admiration at the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes then goes on to refuse to hear the doctrine of the Eucharist.

(e) On that occasion even his own turned against him.

2. St John, very near to the heart of our Lord, has collected many of these incidents (cf. John 2. 13-22; 7. 35; 8. 22; 10. 24; 12. 34).

### His attraction

#### I. *We find that he was intensely attractive in his personality:*

(a) The Samaritans soon discovered this, and they hated the Jews almost as much as the Jews hated them (John 4. 40).

(b) The apostles needed only one word to leave all things and follow him ;

(c) crowds follow him with enthusiasm even though they might have to go a long time without food—only to be explained by their attraction to his person.

(d) Even those who one day set out to take him prisoner are forced to hold their hands, because no man, to their knowledge, had ever spoken like this man (John 7. 46).

#### 2. *This is an attraction that gives rise to the most beautiful flashes of courage:*

(a) the man who was blind from birth, in his discussion with the Pharisees (John 19. 27);

(b) Thomas, who says that he is willing to go and die with Christ (John 11. 16);

(c) an attraction that makes all men love him who really know him, like the woman cured of the flux of blood, the centurion, or the sinner Magdalen.

### Conclusion

1. So Jesus walks through history as he did through his own life, causing fear, lack of understanding on the one hand, and an irresistible attraction for souls on the other.

2. Two acts of homage to his power and his love.

## E: Confession and pardon of sins

### Familiarity breeds contempt

1. That to which we are very accustomed loses ground in our appreciation. St Augustine repeats this phrase many times with reference to the stars and the natural wonders of the universe.
2. But if there is any application for it surely it should be to the sacrament of penance, in which sins are forgiven so easily.
  - (a) The admiration of the Pharisees is justified, because who can forgive sins except God ? But we, so accustomed to seeing the confessional boxes in our churches, do not advert to, or ponder over, the treasures of power and mercy which this sacrament entails.
  - (b) If pardon were granted, shall we say, only in Rome, and then only once or twice in a lifetime, we would hold those to be most fortunate who could make the journey and obtain forgiveness; yet it is always open to us.
3. We might meditate with profit on this sacrament.

### The exclusive power of God

1. Only God can forgive sin, as is obvious from the moment we realize that sin is an offence against God.
2. Only God can restore order in this chaos, and that implies a supernatural, divine order, a restoration of our sonship.
3. Therefore more is required to forgive sin than is needed to cure a paralytic. One is in the physical order, the other in the supernatural.

### Redemption of Christ and confession of sins

1. *What was necessary in order to forgive sins?*
  - (a) It would be necessary to write a complete treatise on the redemption to answer that question;
  - (b) infinite satisfaction had to be offered to an offended God ; that was the truth.
2. *God had to take flesh and dwell among us.*
3. *What was sufficient then that men might have a share in this power :*
  - (a) First Sunday after Easter we have the scene;
  - (b) Christ appears to his apostles and says, Receive the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, etc.
  - (c) Now men had the power which was exclusive to God.
    - i. God dies, and men forgive; the former had to shed his blood; it is enough for us to say a few words;



ii. it is enough to say them and the soul which is paralysed rises again and feels the flush of new life running through its veins. The enemy has become a friend, the condemned an heir.

### Our attitude towards it—what should it be?

1. *Admiration:*

Like that of the hearers of our Lord's words.

2. *Praise of God:*

- (a) Because he has willed to pardon me,
- (b) and has made it so easy.

3. *Make use of it:*

Is it not a shameful thing that the Church should have to insist on the obligation of confessing once a year? Which sick person needs to be told time and again that he should seek a doctor? or which condemned man needs to be reminded to ask for pardon?

4. *Receive it with reverence:*

How many confessions are really useless through carelessness!

## F: Frequent confession

### The remedy for weak souls

1. In preaching about the power granted by Christ to the apostles nearly always reference is made to this passage of today's Gospel, in which it is plain that Christ has the power to forgive sins. When he appeared to the apostles he communicated it to them.

2. *For this reason the Gospel suggests the theme of confession:*

- (a) We intend to speak of it as a cure for spiritual paralysis.
- (b) It is more closely related to the whole scene of this miracle—the cure of the sick man can be compared to a meeting between Christ and the paralysed soul.

### Souls with paralysis

i. *We are not now talking about the confession of mortal sins:*

(a) We are dealing here with those souls who normally do not commit mortal sin, but who live in union with Christ. However, they do fall frequently into sins of infidelity, laziness; they are full of bad habits, sensuality, self-love, etc.

(b) Such souls are not strictly bound to confession; venial sins, even if deliberate, need not be mentioned in confession, because there are many other ways by which they can be pardoned, by prayer, assistance at Mass, contrition, etc.

2. However, we wish to present to these souls the sacrament of Penance as a sure means of cure for their condition.

### Confession, effective because of its supernatural value

1. The Council of Trent says that venial sins can, with profit, be confessed, as is proved by the constant practice of devout souls.

2. Make good use of this sacrament, then, because it is a true meeting between Christ and the soul, Christ who is the resurrection and the life—that is, because of its supernatural value.

(a) With regard to sin—in confession grace is given:

i. A strengthening and increase of the life of the soul, increases too, in charity.

ii. Together with this there is a helping grace to stimulate the soul to greater love and repentance. This casts out venial sin as the light dispels the darkness.

iii. To the personal merits of the individual are added those of Christ.

(b) With regard to the consequences of sin:

Confession gives a right to all the actual graces necessary to get rid of laziness, the weakness caused by sin; slackening of concupiscence, a removal of impediments to God's action in the soul, etc.

(c) For that reason confession provides a much more effective means of getting rid of venial sin in all its aspects than anything else could do.

(d) The soul receives through it new freshness, impulse towards God, careful attention to the spiritual life.

### The psychological value of confession

1. There is no doubt that confession has great importance, because to receive it with profit one must exercise the higher faculties of the mind, memory, repentance, acts of resolution, etc.

2. If this is done properly then the will is trained more perfectly than by any extra-sacramental act.

3. For that reason, in frequent confession we should insist on due preparation and make sure that it is done as perfectly as possible so as to draw from this practice the greatest advantage.

### It helps for the doing of good

1. *Frequent confession looks to the future, is constructive:*

(a) It leads to greater abandonment to God, Christian customs, victory over our sensual appetites and weaknesses;

(b) through it we are more and more identified with Christ and his spirit, especially in regard to expiation and repentance for sin;

(c) from it come self-denial, sacrifice of self;

2. Intimately united with this is the idea of spiritual direction, recommended by Pius XII (cf. *Mystici Corporis*).

## G: Dispositions necessary for frequent confession

## Frequent confession and perfection

1. He who seeks Christ in frequent confession is undoubtedly on the way to perfection. The statement is a bold one but certain.
2. But for it to be true we have to pay attention to the conditions necessary in the soul, so as to get the most fruit out of confession, because there are many souls who use confession frequently but do not advance as they should. There is a fault, without doubt, in the dispositions.

## A sincere desire for perfection

1. *This is demanded as a general disposition of soul:*

(a) He who is only concerned with avoiding mortal sin, without bothering much about venial sin, certain infidelities and faults and who is not resolved to fight against them seriously, is not in a condition to make frequent confession with real profit. The latter is impossible to reconcile with a life of tepidity.

(b) Yet frequent confession could be one of the most effective means to combat this tepidity, but it is necessary 'to practise it with a straight conscience, with the firm resolution to fight against voluntary sin, however insignificant, or against any carelessness; with a firm desire to be more united with God and Christ, i.e. there must be a firm desire for the interior life.

2. *According to this:*

(a) For the perfect, those in the higher stages of the spiritual life, frequent confession is recommended because they will find in it strength and courage to fight for a life in God and for God.

(b) Those who are less perfect will find in confession an effective means of fighting against imperfections, egoism, sensuality, laziness, discouragement, etc. They will re-discover Christ every time; overcome routine—the great danger for them.

## Purpose of amendment and sorrow in frequent confession

1. The principal dispositions for a good confession are a purpose of amendment and sincere sorrow for sin. In the case of frequent confession the purpose of amendment is all-important, so much so that it might be said that the whole of the confession has to be directed towards it so that it can be fruitful.

2. *The purpose of amendment:*

(a) Those who make frequent confession are in danger of, either not making a good purpose of amendment or of making it lightly and



without much serious thought. They accuse themselves, nearly always, of the same sins; there is little or no progress, neither in the number or the kind of sins, nor in any increase in the zeal to remove them.

(b) In such circumstances it is difficult for frequent confession to be fruitful. Such people have to keep in mind what St Francis de Sales says; that it is an abuse to confess a sin which we are not resolved to avoid, or at least to fight against seriously.

i. *a general purpose to be better is not enough* ; for the validity of the sacrament it may be, but not for it to be really fruitful ;

ii. *it is more convenient to limit the purpose to one or two kinds of sin* ; perhaps, even better still, to one sin against which we wish to fight and on which we can concentrate all our strength after the confession. We must propose little things, but well done, and with all our might;

iii. *at times it is convenient to make a resolution which is something positive*, i.e. not so much to avoid a sin as to acquire a virtue.

(c) in any case, these three conditions must be observed:

i. *the resolution must be practical*—that is, about something we can do, not something impossible. It would be absurd to make a resolution not to have any distractions in prayer, for instance. It would be practical to say: As soon as I find myself distracted I will recollect my mind again to prayer;

ii. *it must be adapted to the needs of the moment and the circumstances*, for example, linked to our spiritual reading, meditation, falls, etc. It is a useful thing to link it in this way with the liturgical season or feasts;

iii. *we must have patience*’, it is not a good thing to change it at each confession, but rather it should be continued for some time, until more or less effective.

### 3. *Sorrow*:

(a) It is useful to have a general sorrow for all sin, mortal or venial, present or past.

(b) The more importance given to the sorrow the better will be the confession. Man should detest any offence against God and he should renew this every time he goes to confession.

(c) But with this there should be a special sorrow for those sins which, here and now, interest us most and those about which we have made a purpose of amendment.

(d) In other words, both with regard to the purpose of amendment and the sorrow, the idea is that they should not merely be general, but concentrated on one point.

### The confession of our sins

1. *This will be a consequence of what has already been said:*

(a) We shall not try to make a complete list of all and each one of our faults, with minute details, etc. ; but rather those about which we need to make a firm purpose of amendment.

(b) We must not stop at the sins, but also consider occasions, influences, sentiments, etc. which have made us fall into them.

(c) There will always be our dominant fault or sentiment—that must be examined and attacked.

2. We must pay special attention to the sins committed against our good resolution of the past confession, seeing also if there was any attempt to correct it. The more limits we can put on this examination the better, especially if we are most careful to relate it to our purpose of amendment.

### Conclusion

1. Concerning the penance given we shall have little to say at the moment.

(a) It should be accepted as a special means of getting rid of the punishment due to our sins ;

(b) also make use of our prayers, works and sufferings as part of it.

2. If these instructions are followed there is no doubt that the soul will make great strides in perfection.

H: Arise and walk

Which is easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee,  
or arise and walk ?

1. For both one needs the power of God, but the resurrection of a soul is a greater miracle than any physical one (we have already dealt with this in the case of the raising of the widow's son).

2. But in the spiritual order it is hard to see which is more difficult, to cure souls or make them walk. We see many who rise from sin to grace, but how few they are who seem to feel this new spiritual life within them and do something about it.

Yet Christ's work is both positive and active

1. The Gospel is far from the Indian philosophies which tend to submerge the individual in an inactive contemplation of the divinity; far, too, from the modern philosophies of despair.

2. The work of justification has a negative and a positive aspect ; one the wiping away of sin; the other the infusion of new life and vigour.

(a) This is the main work of Christ, to bring life to souls, and that it may grow abundantly more and more.

(b) When Paul speaks of death to sin he always does so as a preamble to resurrection to a new life. His conclusion is always the same, live in Christ, seeking what is above, not things of this world.

(c) This new life is full of activity—its symbol is the vine, the athlete who runs in a race to win the crown of victory, the boxer who is not merely beating the air.

Therefore it is necessary in every case to say:  
Arise and walk

i. *Souls:*

(a) What are you doing all the day idle ? life which is not lived dies.

(b) Christ does not give talents so that they may be buried in the ground ; he has not given you that wonderful organization of grace and the virtues so that you can let them rust in your souls and die from lack of use.

(c) Christ has shown you the way—perfection. There are many mansions in his Father's house and different stars in heaven, but why should you be content with the lowest mansion and be the least brilliant of all the stars ? Your aim should be : From sin to grace ; from grace to perfection ; from perfection to sanctity. From the sendee of the devil to that of Christ, to the Body of Christ, as an active member !

2. *To those in authority:*

(a) They are leaders of men ; they should look at something more than the money side of things.

(b) Look at your workmen, your subjects, see that they are well looked after in every way, material and spiritual care.

3. *To the humble:*

(a) you can also walk, in your humility ;

(b) in the social line you are very important, because so much depends on your work and your interest in it ;

(c) you are the best apostles for your fellow workmen. This has been the case many times in the political field ; why should it not be so in the spiritual ?

4. *To priests:*

(a) Arise from a life of mediocre piety ; if sanctity is not for you, then in heaven's name for whom is it destined ?

(b) Put yourselves in the front rank as this paralytic did ; look at Jesus, in prayer before the Tabernacle. Then arise and walk.

(c) Beware of too much activity unless it is based on Christ and returns to Christ. Keep your eyes on him all the time and you will not fail or be discouraged.



(d) Remember your prayer; meditation is one of the most important things in your life. Never neglect it. Meditation and sin are incompatible.

5. *The whole world:*

(a) You live in a material world, be careful not to be too much attracted by it, it will pass.

(b) Material problems oppress you— it is more obvious every day that we are living in a world which finds it hard to think of anything except material progress.

(c) Don't be deceived—it will all pass and one thing will be left, the life of the spirit. Cultivate it.

## I: Tepidity'

### A kind of spiritual paralysis

1. *It has been compared to many illnesses:*

(a) To tuberculosis, because it undermines and weakens the organism without pain, until it leads it to death ;

(b) to any kind of anaemia, because of the loss of strength which it causes in the soul.

2. *But we can also compare it to paralysis:*

(a) The tepid soul does not advance; it is satisfied with mediocrity; it is without strength to walk.

(b) The only thing that worries it is the danger of a fall.

## The tepid

i. It is not easy to define, unless in relation to perfection. The two extremes are sanctity and mortal sin; the tepid soul is half way between but with a tendency to grow colder.

(a) We do not call one tepid who falls and then rises again to fresh and more vigorous efforts, correcting himself daily and striving for perfection ;

(b) nor one who has known and loved God, but one whose base and perverse habits make him fall many times and only win few and difficult victories.

2. The tepid man is one who has been fervent but who has fallen away from his first fervour.

(a) Fr Faber says that tepidity' supposes great efforts beforehand, that one has reached a certain height in the spiritual life, but has fallen from it through distaste, human respect, or some other cause. A tepid man is never one who has always been cold, never fervent.

(b) No; the tepid man is one who is patient and long-suffering while he has nothing to be impatient about or when he does not suffer; meek and gentle until he is opposed; humble, until his pride

is hurt; who would willingly be a saint if he could do it free and for nothing; one who wants to have virtues without mortification; ready for anything—except the fight to win heaven.

### An examination of tepidity

1. *Generally it is a state which refuses to take venial sin seriously:*

(a) No zeal in the will, which refuses all kinds of sacrifice and mortification ;

(b) a long-standing negligence in the doing of one's duty, the practice of charity and other virtues; a life of half-piety, one which insists that God is not small-minded enough to bother about certain small things, etc.

2. *It has the following elements:*

(a) Weakness of will:

i. the accent is all the time on 'I would like to', and not 'I will'. Gradually the will is weakened to the extent that it hardly makes an effort and does not even consider the effort necessary. It ends by finding any effort too much for it and so does nothing;

ii. many times it is necessary to look for the cause of this in the intellect; abandonment of spiritual reading and meditation which would put us in contact with the mind of God ; the general atmosphere which surrounds a person, these are the causes of tepidity, more often than not.

(b) neglect of prayer:

i. beginning with the extraordinary; then the usual prayer.

ii. At first conscience hits us hard, but later it is stifled. This is the worst moment in tepidity; through lack of fidelity to the Holy Spirit conscience is silenced, and the most terrible consequences can follow.

### Through tepidity to sin

1. Not into venial sin, which is the usual companion of tepidity, but into mortal sin.

(a) It is capable of changing the conscience in such a way that even great sins, from the mere custom of not giving them any importance, can be considered as slight and insignificant.

(b) Join to this the weakness of the will; it is easy to see how this can give way, in cases of grave peril.

2. Experience teaches us that souls do not suddenly drop from a state of fervour to mortal sin, but that they do it gradually, through a life of tepidity. This has its explanation.

(a) When the soul abandons prayer and the will becomes weak, the fervour of charity is diminished; thus we receive fewer graces from God; this means less fervour still; and less fervour means less grace—the circle goes on.

(b) On the other hand the passions increase in power over us, pride, sensuality, laziness, comfort, etc. All is prepared now for the devil's last attack.

(c) He is a terrible enemy, because he knows our weakness so well; he will not appear under his true form, but under another one, more attractive.

### Woe to those who are tepid

#### 1. *The reprobation of the Lord:*

In the Apocalypse we read terrible words about this tepidity; because you are neither hot nor cold I will vomit you out of my mouth (3.16; cf. 2. 5).

#### 2. *Many remedies suggested against tepidity:*

But often they do not meet the difficulty'.

(a) But today's gospel does give us one—go to Christ, as the sick man did; then we are liable to hear the words which may cure us.

(b) This meeting with Christ can take place in the confessional. Frequent confession, if it is done properly, offers us the great remedy for tepidity. Then the very power of Christ is working in us. If frequent confession is used as it should be, there will never be any danger of tepidity taking a hold on us.

### J: Venial sin

#### Seven times a day

#### 1. *Only our Lady was exempt from all sin, even the smallest:*

(a) All the rest of mankind have to beg: Forgive us our trespasses.

(b) Of all of us the Scripture phrase is true, the just man falls seven times (cf. Prov. 24.16; Eccles. 7. 21).

#### 2. *If we say that we have no sin, then we are liars:*

St John says: Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves; it means that truth does not dwell in us (1 John 1. 8). It may be true that many do not commit mortal sin;

(a) but there is another kind of sin, which is called venial because it is more easily pardoned; it is a deliberate offence against God in light matter;

(b) or again, as many times as one of the three conditions for mortal sin is either lacking or at least weakened, we have venial sin;

(c) venial sin does not kill the soul, but it does weaken its vitality.



It diminishes

1. It is a great mistake to think that venial sin is something insignificant, something which docs not matter. It is an offence against God in any case, and that is bad enough.

2. Certainly the immediate effect of it is not the loss of the grace of God or of his friendship; but it does diminish charity in the soul.

(a) If we sin venially God cannot love us as much as he would have done had we struggled to avoid it.

(b) The very demand of love is that we should avoid things which do not please the beloved; if we commit venial sin we act against love. This has the effect of depriving us of graces which God would otherwise have given us freely if we, instead of sinning, had given him the pleasure of avoiding that small infraction of the law.

(c) The more venial sin we commit so much the less love of God in our hearts.

(d) It is a sign that the soul is not generous with God if it sins venially. It lacks fidelity, zeal—but above all, generosity.

(e) To explain this loss of charity we must say that, by the fervour of love we mean not only the promptness and facility with which it makes acts of love, but also the promptness and facility in acts of the other virtues. Venial sin diminishes and to some extent impedes the exercise of the virtues against which we have sinned, and for that reason it diminishes also the fervour of charity; and since the opposite of fervour is apathy and coldness, from this it follows that venial sin hardens the soul and diminishes its strength and fervour. It makes it apathetic where religion is concerned.

Other effects

1. Moralists give us a list of the other effects of venial sin; there is the guilt of it, for one thing, and the consequent debt of punishment.

2. But one of the most serious effects is that venial sin leads gradually to tepidity and therefore prepares the way for mortal sin.

(a) It has been said that the absence of a horror of venial sin in the soul is one of the first signs of tepidity. Bourdaloue says of it: It leads to mortal sin, just as an illness leads towards death. From venial to mortal sin there is often only a very small gap. Because of this it often happens that one is taken for the other.

(b) We have to understand what this means; venial sin never actually becomes mortal by an addition of sin upon sin. Nor does it diminish our sanctifying grace; but it leads indirectly to mortal sin, because it deprives the soul of other graces and weakens the will. It deprives it of the horror of sin and prepares the soul for all kinds of offences.

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### Against the community

1. All sin has a repercussion on the Church—the Body of Christ.
2. It causes harm to the whole community as a community and as a body.
  - (a) It is a blot or stain on the immaculate bride of Christ; an obstacle which prevents the outpouring of grace on all the members of Christ's body;
  - (b) it shows a lack of love for Mother Church, from whom alone come life and salvation for the Christian.

### The saints and venial sin

*They had a real horror of it and of its effects on the soul:*

- (a) Of St John Berchmans it is said that he considered any infraction of the rule as a most grave thing.
- (b) St Aloysius Gonzaga and St Teresa of Avila had a real horror of it, the latter to such an extent that one would think she was talking of mortal sins.
- (c) St Francis de Sales gives this advice: It is necessary to purify the soul from any affection it may have towards venial sin; it is not lawful to feed the soul on constant affection for venial sin; it would be madness consciously to keep in our wills such affection for a thing which is so offensive to God as is the will to displease him.... Is it possible that a soul which has been raised to his love should not merely offend him in these things but also have an affection for things which displease him?

### Venial sin and God

*I. We can see something of its malice when we consider God's attitude towards it:*

(a) Possibly we need only think of purgatory:

According to one of the saints, its smallest punishment is far and away beyond anything we could possibly suffer in this life.

(b) We should remember the cases in Scripture of the punishment for venial sins:

- i. Lot's wife, for curiosity;
- ii. the sisters of Moses, for grumbling (Num. 12. 10);
- iii. the forty-two boys who insulted the prophet Eliseus (4 Kings 2. 23-34);
- iv. David, for vanity (1 Par. 21. 9-30), etc.

*2. Persevere in my love:*

(a) There are no words more beautiful or more encouraging for the soul than those, spoken by Christ at the Last Supper—Persevere in my love.

(b) As often as we commit deliberate venial sin so often we impede the redemption of Christ, in some way, however small; we reject and despise the sacrifice he made for us.

(c) How much ingratitude and insult there is in venial sin! We should all be very humble about this and go before Christ in the Tabernacle, asking him to free us from our affection to those things which displease him.

## K: Have confidence (1)

### Introduction

The first words of our Lord to the sick man were words of courage; and our great motive for encouragement is that Christ has told us to be of good heart, to have confidence in him.

(a) All the circumstances which surround the miracle teach us the same confidence;

(b) we might profit by taking a look at them.

### Christ knows us

1. Christ looked at the sick man and knew his illness. He had compassion on him.

2. He knows us much better than we know ourselves or better than anyone else could ever know us, even those most near and dear to us.

(a) Christ knew that this man had a more serious illness within his soul than the illness of his body;

(b) perhaps the sick man had not realized it, at least at this moment, or had not thought of anything else than the health of his body;

(c) his relations and those who helped him could not have known his spiritual needs.

3. But Jesus knew—and knows—the real scale of values, in his gifts to us.

(a) He is always ready to give spiritual health, as in the present case;

(b) he may also grant us material or bodily health and well-being, as in the case of this man;

(c) but even when he refuses to grant material health or when he sends us the cross, he is always seeking our spiritual health, and our eternal salvation.

### With a loving knowledge

1. This is indicated by his words, Son, take courage. The man was looking for a physician, a miracle worker, even a God if you like—but he found one who had the love of a Father.

2. From all eternity the Word of God has had a loving knowledge of us.



(a) Because of this, we have received existence out of so many possible souls, who might have been given life instead of us;

(b) a loving knowledge that has raised us to the level of the supernatural life, as images of the Son before the Father;

(c) a loving knowledge which has made him descend from heaven to save us, suffer all that he did suffer, and die on the cross for us, to show us the way to heaven and to lift us from the bed of sin on which we lay, as did this paralytic.

### Jesus can do all things

1. He can do what is least important—give us health of body.

2. He can do what is much more important, give us health of soul.

3. *He can look after us:*

(a) in all our material necessities, in so far as, if we do what we can, we may lay all the rest on his shoulders with confidence;

(b) in our spiritual needs; for this he makes use of all the powers he has received in heaven and on earth—and he sends his apostles, after his resurrection, with those same powers.

### Motives for confidence

1. *Jesus knows me., just as I am:*

(a) He appreciates all my defects and does not forget my good works; he knows well how to excuse me;

(b) he knows my needs and my sufferings, since he either sends them or at least permits them.

2. *This knowledge is one of love:*

(a) He has created me to sanctify me and to give me eternal life;

(b) whatever he has done for all mankind in his Incarnation and redemption, I can well apply to myself alone—he has done it for me.

3. *He can do all things:*

(a) Each one can appreciate this for himself in this own life;

(b) he can do all things against our enemies. Even though he may not unmask them completely in this life, we know that he will do so in the eternal life to come.

### L: Have confidence (2)

#### Confidence is not hope

1. Hope is a theological virtue; confidence is something quite different. It is a condition or part of fortitude; it supposes hope and rests in God.

2. Christ says: Son, take courage. The whole idea is rest on me, rely on me—it is a phrase which is constantly repeated in the Gospels.

## The foundation of this confidence

i. Man knows that he cannot rely on himself; his whole experience tells him this.

### 2. *Confidence in oneself:*

Some phrases of St Augustine tell us how we stand in this matter;

(a) he who hopes in himself is wretched ; he who hopes in another is even more so ;

(b) if you have confidence in another man your humility is inordinate; if you have confidence in yourself, your pride is dangerous;

(c) the man who suffers from a disordered humility never raises his head; the one who is proud falls easily into ruin.

## God, the omnipotent and merciful

### 1. *The root of our confidence:*

It is in our all-powerful and most merciful Father; he who knows us and has looked on us with mercy. Therefore, just as hope wishes for nothing less than God, so confidence rests on nothing but God ; because it is proper to infinite Being to produce infinite good (St Thomas. 2-2. q. 17, a. 1. *ad 2umf*)

### 2. *Theology gives consolation to humble and timid souls:*

God, who will not save us without our help, is always at our complete disposal once we make up our minds to co-operate fully with him and place all our confidence in him. Then the whole of divine omnipotence is with us. The spirit of God cannot operate within us without this confidence in him. Eph. 3. 12.

## The theology of hope

*The figure of Christ, as God, granting both bodily and spiritual health:*

(a) The man, from whom Christ asks co-operation—Have courage, son! He asks him for confidence, hope.

(b) The help of other creatures, together with Christ—those who carried the sick man to him and the crowd who gave thanks to God for the miracle;

(c) on the other hand, those who refused to believe and have confidence, the Pharisees, envious of Christ and warned once again by him.

(d) The whole of the scene is one which should give us great courage and confidence in God, teaching us to fix our eyes upon Christ always with loving hope that he will help us provided we have confidence in him.

### Hope and confidence

1. They should not be confused one with the other—but they are related one to the other. In the young man there was hope for his bodily cure and confidence in Christ.
2. Hope has a double object, the good which is hoped for and the divine help to attain it.

### Effects of hope as a theological virtue

#### 1. *Creates in us new life:*

It lifts our eyes from earth to heaven; it helps to keep us on the road of true wisdom.

#### 2. *Brings us joy:*

Because it teaches us to rejoice already in some good as if it were possessed here and now.

#### 3. *A source of real spiritual energy:*

Because since we hope firmly in the power and promises of God to attain some good, we work even harder than before, helped all the time by the thought of God's power.

#### 4. *Contains a mixture of sadness and joy:*

Sadness because we are still far from our goal and live without the vision of God we are hoping for; there is with us always the danger of losing God through sin. There is also joy in anticipation of the good things to come, helped by God's power and sustained by his promises.

### The canticles of hope

It has been well said that the psalms are the canticles of hope—it is mentioned so many times in them. If we may choose one, let it be Psalm 125, in which the accent is on the firmness of the man who hopes in God.

### M: Courage

1. The men who carried this paralytic to Christ's feet in spite of all the difficulties in their way are an image of courage and endeavour.
2. The world needs brave men, especially in the time in which we are now living; life has become so complicated that it has made the tasks of the apostolate more difficult. Men live in vast communities, rather than in small groups—and it is harder for us, with the means at our disposal, to influence such groups.
3. Courage is needed and also imagination.



### two acts

1. This courage will include two acts, one of undertaking great things and the other of resisting with strength.
2. Resistance of itself is useless unless it is at the same time at the service of a great enterprise; we must not confuse courage in resisting with obstinacy and the adhering to our own opinion against reason and good judgement.
3. On the other hand, it is of no use to conceive great plans unless we have the courage to resist and so overcome the obstacles which present themselves in our path.
4. An example of the two combined is Christ, given over for three whole years entirely to the formation of a group of fishermen; or in the very work of redemption itself.

### Two more acts

If we study this courage from the point of view of the task which is undertaken we shall see that it includes two more acts :

- (a) confidence in decision;
- (b) magnanimity to continue in the undertaking of great works.

### Obstacles

1. From the point of view of the courage necessary to resist and overcome obstacles we may note :
  - (a) patience necessary to overcome obstacles which may last a long time;
  - (b) perseverance to resist over this long time.
2. Those tasks are not really difficult which take a gigantic effort, but only for a short time. The real difficulty lies in our will, which is usually capable of great efforts provided that the thing is over in a relatively short time, but is often incapable of continuing to work hard over a long period.
3. It would be difficult to come across greater obstacles than those which today are opposed to good in all its forms.
  - (a) Because evil is more organized than it was before ;
  - (b) corruption has more means at its disposal for spreading error and evil than it had before; there is also more freedom for it.
4. On the other hand the good are also more organized than before and there are more of them, it would seem, ready and willing to undertake the great task of the conversion of the world.

## 350 EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## We still need men of courage

1. *In the field of philosophy:*

To be able to resist the attacks of error and to propose the true Christian philosophy in a way which will make it intelligible and attractive to others.

2. *In the realm of science:*

Even though things are better than they were in that field we still need militant Catholics in it.

3. *In the field of politics and social life:*

From the highest positions to the lowest, covering the whole field of national and local government, trades unions, education, etc.

4. However, we must not think merely in terms of great national and international problems, but also of something to which we are all called—work in the parish. In the battlefield of Christ nothing is little which is done for God.

*Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

## THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST

### SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Ephesians 4. 23-28

Gospel: Matthew 22. 1-14

#### Texts concerning grace

##### 1. *Old Testament:*

Only on Noe did God look with favour. Gen. 6. 8.

The blessings God has granted thee can never fail. Ps. 44. 3.

Sun to enlighten, shield to protect us, the Lord God has favour, has honour to bestow. *Ibid.* 83. 12.

.... he laughs at the mocker, grants his favours to the humble. Prov. 3. 34.

A kindly man wins the Lord's favour, a schemer is his enemy. *Ibid.* 12. 3.

Fools make light of the guilt that needs atonement, and leave honest men to enjoy the Lord's favour. *Ibid.* 14. 9.

##### 2. *New Testament:*

Hail, thou who art full of grace . . . Luke 1. 28.

Do not be afraid, thou hast found favour in the sight of God. *Ibid.* 30.

And so Jesus advanced in wisdom with the years, and in favour both with God and with men. Luke 2. 52.

But all those who did welcome him he empowered to become the children of God, all those who believe in his name. John 1. 12.

And the Word was made flesh, and came to dwell among us; and we had sight of his glory, glory such as belong to the Father's only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. . . . We have all received something out of his abundance, grace answering to grace. John 1.

Believe me, no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless birth come to him from water, and from the Holy Spirit. *Ibid.* 3. 5.

If thou knewest what it is God gives, and who this is that is saying to thee, Give me drink, it would have been for thee to ask him instead, and he would have given thee living water . . . the water I give him will be a spring of water within him, that flows continually to bring him everlasting life. *Ibid.* 4. 10-14.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, performed great miracles and signs among the people. Acts 6. 8.



## 3J2 NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The faithful who had come over with Peter, holding to the tradition of circumcision as they did, were astonished to find that the free gift of the Holy Spirit could be lavished upon the Gentiles. Acts 10. 45.

And justification comes to us as a free gift from his grace, through our redemption in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3. 24.

The law intervened, only to amplify our fault; but, as our fault was amplified, grace has been more amply bestowed than ever; that so, where guilt held its reign of death, justifying grace should reign instead, to bring us eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 5. 20-21.

Sin will not be able to play the master over you any longer; you serve grace now, not the law. . . . Sin offers death for wages; God offers us eternal life as a free gift, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 6. 14 and 23.

Nothing else than the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. 7.25.

The spirit you have now received is not, as of old, a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself thus assures our spirit, that we are children of God; and if we are his children, then we are his heirs too; heirs of God, sharing the inheritance of Christ; only we must share his sufferings, if we are to share his glory. Rom. 8. 15-17.

All those who from the first were known to him, he has destined from the first to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brethren. So predestined, he called them; so called, he justified them; so justified, he glorified them. Rom. 8. 29-30.

So it is in our time; a remnant has remained true; grace has chosen it. Rom. 11. 5.

And if it is due to grace, then it is not due to observance of the law; if it were, grace would be no grace at all. *Ibid.* 11. 6.

Only by God's grace, I am what I am, and the grace he has shewn me has not been without fruit.... 1 Cor. 15. 10.

And now, to further that work, we entreat you not to offer God's grace an ineffectual welcome. 2 Cor. 6. 1.

God has the power to supply you abundantly with every kind of blessing.... *Ibid.* 9. 8.

Three times it made me entreat the Lord to rid me of it; but he told me, My grace is enough for thee; my strength finds its full scope in thy weakness. *Ibid.* 12. 8-9.

Our sins had made dead men of us, and he, in giving life to Christ, gave life to us, too; it is his grace that has saved you- raised us up too, enthroned us too above the heavens, in Christ Jesus Eph. 2. 5-6.

Yes, it was grace that saved you, with faith for its instrument; it did not come from yourselves, it was God's gift, nor from any action of yours, or there would be room for pride. *Ibid.* 2. 8-9.

A special grace has been entrusted to thee; prophecy awarded it, and the imposition of the presbyters' hands went with it; do not let it suffer from neglect. 1 Tim. 4. 14. Cf. 2 Tim. 1. 6.

So, justified by his grace, we are to become heirs, with the hope of eternal life set before us. Titus 3. 7.

Let us come boldly, then, before the throne of grace, to meet with mercy, and win that grace which will help us in our needs. Heb. 4.16.

Through him God has bestowed on us high and treasured promises; you are to share the divine nature, with the world's corruption, the world's passions, left behind. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

See how the Father has shown his love towards us; that we should be counted as his sons, should be his sons. 1 John 3. 1. Cf. 3. 9.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

### I. LITURGICAL

On many occasions the liturgical circumstances give us motives for an accommodated sense or interpretation of the Gospel. This happens with the scene of the wedding feast. Twice in the course of the year we meet this presentation of the spiritual life under the image of a wedding feast, once on the Second Sunday after Pentecost (St Luke's version) and again on this Sunday, in St Matthew's account. There is a common background to both narratives in spite of the differences they contain. However, there are different interpretations. The liturgy has an influence on the homily, and on the former Sunday the proximity to Corpus Christi leads naturally to preaching on the Eucharist; here we may fix our attention more on sanctifying grace.

All the texts of the Mass point to this theme; the Introit, with its: I am the refuge of my people; the Epistle, with the idea of renovation—a new life, a new man . . . the Communion, with the idea of our paths being directed towards the observation of God's law. All these have a close relation to sanctifying grace.

The Introit has been chosen because of the stationary Church for today's Mass. In the ancient Roman lists the church appointed for the Sunday before the feast of SS. Cosmas and Damian was the basilica of these saints; therefore we find here the same Introit as that of the Thursday of the third week in Lent, when the same stationary church was used. Perhaps this also accounts for the various references to health and renovation, since these saints were also doctors.



## IL EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

## A: The Epistle: Ephesians 4. 23-28

i. *Argument:*

Just as the guests had to remove their old garments and put on the wedding dress, so the Ephesians must put away all their old habits, vanities and the darkness of idolatry and put on Christ and his truth.

Conversion is the exchanging of the state of sin for that of justification, and consists, not merely in the new and interior life of grace, but also in the active practice of a Christian life. From verse 22 onwards St Paul describes this sanctification in three stages: (1) a putting off of the old and corrupt man; (2) a renewal of the mind; (3) a putting on of the new man according to Christ. The three stages are simultaneous and progressive; the former because there is no justification without them; the latter because the putting on of Christ is something which must ever increase and become more perfect. It is a process of service and imitation of Christ which must be life-long.

St Paul explains these three stages clearly. The putting off of the old man consists in not living like the Gentiles in vanity of the senses, obscurity of mind, far from God, in the bestiality of a sensuous life and avarice.

Putting on the new man implies embracing sanctity and justice, that is the whole of religion and the moral order.

But he goes on to bring the whole thing down to a more practical level still: in order to live in justice and sanctity all Christians must avoid lies, anger, and theft; they must imitate Christ in his love; they must have a hatred for sins of the flesh and give themselves to prayer. Then he goes on to deal with the rules which govern the various states of life. The piece chosen for today's Epistle deals only with the positive element in justification and with the necessity of guarding against lies, anger, and theft.

2. *Texts:*

## (a) There must be a renewal . . .

The old voices must go; this is the first thing imposed on the new convert to the faith, a complete change in mentality, in his way of thinking about God and the world. It supposes a complete change of life, in contrast with the past errors and blindness. To renew oneself is to grow younger.

## (b) in the inner life of your minds . . .

A strange expression which has received many varied interpretations. St Thomas understands it of a renewal which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Other authors, with St Augustine, think



that the word inner (D.V. Spirit) refers to the noun *mind* as if it were an adjective, in which case the sense means your spiritual mind.

(c) the new self:

As opposed to the old. The one is according to Christ, the other according to Adam. One is concupiscence, the other grace; the one is mortal, the other immortal.

(d) created in God's image . . .

God made the first man in his image and likeness. God also has in his mind the idea of what this new man should be like and all our sanctity consists in knowing and trying to adapt ourselves to that idea. This is not difficult, because the idea of this ideal man has been drawn for us in the commandments and the counsels of the Gospels. What is more, we need do nothing else but imitate Christ, our model of the new man, who has lived among us and proposed to us his life as our exemplar. St Paul, in his usual way, gives us a synthesis of it.

(e) justified and sanctified through the truth:

These are the two main ideas which God has in his mind; justice and truth—sanctity, if you like. Justice means our relations with our neighbour, although it can be made to refer to the whole of the moral order. Sanctity implies our relations with God.

But both of them must be true, and they will be, once they coincide with the divine idea of them. And how shall we know if we have managed to do this? Again it is easy; Christ is the truth (v. 21). Therefore true justice and sanctity consist in being one with Christ.

(f) Away with falsehood . . .

The particular applications now begin, and Paul starts with truth—and the opposite vice, lying. The old man was prone to error, but you must not merely live according to the truth, you must always have it on your lips as well. The most noteworthy thing is the reason he gives for this truth in speech.

(g) membership of the body binds us one to another:

It may seem a strange reason for speaking the truth, but it is not so strange if we remember that we are all members of the one mystical Body and that lying is essentially an anti-social crime, since speech was given to us to communicate our inner thoughts.

(h) Do not let resentment lead you into sin . . .

A new counsel, this time related to anger and which can be divided into three parts. The first is a quotation from a psalm, according to the LXX version. Anger is a passion which, if moderated, is not necessarily a sin (James i. 19), and of which our Lord and God himself have both shown signs. In such circumstances it is a manifestation of the desire for justice and revenge for sin. The evil part

is the passion which is allowed free rein, with the corresponding blindness of mind and lack of mercy which it implies. Anger without sin, is Paul's counsel, which is in full accord with the action of the Lord of the wedding feast, who commanded that his insulting former guests should be punished and orders the man to be cast out who had not on a wedding garment.

(i) the sunset must not find you still angry:

The idea really is to put away as soon as possible the causes for anger.

(j) Do not give the devil his opportunity:

St Paul gives us the motives, imitation of Christ. Anger, like any other sin, opens the way to the devil; but since it is such an evil counsellor, it opens wide the gate to him.

(k) The man who was a thief must be a thief no longer...

Primitive Christianity contained many who were slaves or poor, and these were easily inclined to theft, in their need. Paul holds up to all the idea of work, and what is more, work which will not merely provide us with our strict needs, but will also allow us to give alms. This is an unsuspected aspect *of work*.

*Work* must be, not merely a source *of income for* me, but also for others too, because I am a member of a *social body and, in the Christian field, of the mystical Body of Christ. Just as my tongue, as part of that body, must speak the truth, so too my work must be in favour of the whole body. If this is said to those who must work with their hands, what must be said of those who possess riches in abundance? If even those in modest circumstances have to give alms, what of these others?*

## B: The Gospel: Matthew 22. 1-14

### 1. *Situation and argument:*

The similarity between this passage and the narrative in St Luke (14. 16-24) which is read on the Second Sunday after Pentecost excuses us from a more detailed consideration of it.

The scenes took place on Tuesday and Wednesday' of Holy Week, on the occasion when our Lord challenged his enemies by describing to them in parables the rejection of Israel. It is the day which began with the idea of the barren fig tree and ends with the series of condemnations of the Pharisees and the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end *of the world*.

St Matthew gives us three parables one after the other; that of the two sons, one who obeyed and the other who did not; that of the unfaithful renters of the vineyard, and lastly that of the guests at the wedding feast.

Authors are not agreed as to whether this parable and that of St Luke are the same or not. The fact that St Matthew puts it in a different place from St Luke means nothing, because the former is well-known for his habit of grouping things together under headings rather than in their chronological order.

However, it would appear that, in this case, St Matthew's order should be followed, because the parable seems to form a conclusion to the one which goes before it. Perhaps it was told on more than one occasion, which might account for the slight differences in the narrative. However, it is never wise to insist too much on the details of parables, which are not meant to be history, but the basis for moral and dogmatic teachings.

The argument is obvious. The Chosen People did not heed the call of grace, therefore they are rejected and the kingdom is offered to others who are not Jews. However, it is not enough to be a passive member, one must also possess grace.

2. *Texts:*

(a) a king who held a marriage feast for his son ...

The marriage feast was a common image of the messianic kingdom (cf. Apoc. 19. 9; Isaias 25. 6; Matt. 8.11 and 26.29). John the Baptist compared Christ to the Spouse (John 3. 29). The banquet then is the kingdom of Christ, the Church; and by a logical consequence, the glory of heaven to which it should lead.

(b) sent out his servants . . .

The prophets, but it is difficult to distinguish who are the first ones sent and who they were who came later; but these details are not essential. The office of prophet was common in Jewish history, and those we know of in the Sacred Books must form a small part of the large number of messengers God sent to his people. The one thing we do know is that all of them suffered persecution and that many of them were killed by the very people to whom they had been sent.

(c) The richness of the feast:

It represents the spiritual riches in the Church.

(d) a man there who had no wedding garment. . .

The last words of the first part of the parable—rogues and honest men together—might have made us wonder what these were doing in the kingdom of Christ. This scene shows us that there is more to it than merely gaining an entrance into the Church. To gain heaven we must have inner justification and sanctity. The wedding garment signifies the works of faith in charity, as Augustine says. This idea is well developed by St Gregory. Authors have tried to see how the king could be justified in casting the man out because he had no



wedding garment, and some have gone so far as to say that each one was given such a garment as he went in, which is possible. However, we must not seek absolute historical accuracy in parables, and one thing is certain, the man had no excuse, because he kept silent when asked how he came in like that.

(e) Bind him hand and foot . . .

Some see in this the impossibility of doing anything without grace.

(f) into the darkness . . .

Hell, from the words which follow.

(g) Many are called, but few are chosen:

Possibly a reference to the Jews; it seems to fit better, because our Lord had no intention of revealing anything about the numbers of those who are saved or those who are condemned. There was only one found without a wedding garment, after all! It looks as if the phrase has become transposed and should come at the end of the first part of the parable concerning the unfaithful guests who refused to come.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (PG. 56, 859!?)

#### I. *The banquet:*

They had been invited before, because now he calls them. Let us see what this banquet is. It is the doctrine of justice and the preaching of the faith. Just as food must be well chewed and digested, so preaching must be carefully considered and retained in memory and heart if it is to be of any use to us. The holy and spiritual man is he who, after hearing the word of God, having understood it, keeps it in his memory. . . . The unclean man in the eyes of God is he who neither remembers nor meditates on what he has heard. He who eats of this spiritual banquet fills his spirit, sees his senses opened, feeds on truth, is enriched in faith and so penetrates into the secrets of the divine will, where, if he remains there, he will find eternal life. He who is distracted and walks away from this banquet of preaching finds that his spirit grows empty, his senses held in bondage, his faith withers away and, leaving God, he falls into death.

#### 2. *The invitation:*

The first took place at the time of Abraham, when God told him to leave home and relatives in order to establish himself in a land flowing with milk and honey. This land was not Palestine, but Christ, who gives to all the food of his miracles and the sweet honey of his doctrine. To go to him the Jews had to leave their relatives, that is

those rites of circumcision which united them into one family; also their land, namely the Jewish narrowness. But we too, in order to eat of the banquet of Christ, have to abandon father and mother (Matt. 19. 29) and even our own selves (Luke 9. 23). He abandons his family, not in the sense of despising them, but by loving God more than his parents. He abandons his land who does not follow the will of the flesh.

The banquet began to be prepared at the time of Moses and when the law' was proclaimed on the tables of stone.

Then the first messengers were sent forth to give out the invitations to the feast of the future Spouse, Christ, but the Jews did not wish to listen.

Then came other servants, the apostles, who were to go round the cities and towns of Israel before preaching to the Gentiles or the Samaritans; but they were not heeded either. The oxen and fadings are the saints of both Old and New Testaments, those great aposdes and martyrs whose doctrine, sealed with their blood, has been the food of the Church.

### 3. *The abundance of the feast:*

In this feast you will find all you need for your salvation. If you are ignorant, a teacher; if you are obstinate in sin, the threats of the judgement; if you are burdened with work, the promises of a happy eternity; if you are a coward, simple doctrine; if you are magnanimous, great counsels which will lead you to the life of the angels; if you are sick, medicine which will restore you to health. In the teachings of the Gospel you will find examples which will give you the remedy for every sin.

### 4. *The excuses:*

The excuses given in the Gospel by those who were invited can be interpreted in two ways.

Let us see the first. All man's activities are included under those two, work in the fields or business. That of the fields implies the honest toil recommended by St Paul, while business represents the exaggerated love for gain or honours. You may say to me: But work in the fields can also be a sin? Indeed, if you give yourself over to it in such a way that it becomes an impediment to your faith. It is not the cultivation of the land which is a sin, but the fact that you prefer it to God. The true works of justice must be done with care; while earthly tasks must be undertaken as it were in passing. Those who in their honest toil do not give God his due are worthy of his anger.

We may also understand the farm work as the labour of men of the world and by business the vain preaching of those priests who think more of themselves than they do of God. Those who are invited despise or ill-treat the priests who preach to them. Among the former are those who live so deeply engrossed in the cares of the world

that they do not even hear the word when it is preached to them; the latter are the persecutors.

5. *The man without the wedding garment:*

The Lord visits the feast on the day of judgement and the garment is that true faith which, according to St Paul, consists in putting off the old man with all his works, and putting on the new, created according to God in justice and true holiness, which is the faith. The garments of the old man, then, are the sordid, unclean and corrupt works of the flesh; the beautiful sarments of the new man are the works of faith. He who does the works of darkness and lives among Christians as one of them, does an injury to Christianity. Let a man, then, choose his garment according to the place in which he lives, or the place according to the garment he wears, that is, let him suit his works to his faith, or his faith to his works. He who wishes to have part with Christ, let him do the works of Christ; and he who does not wish to do the works of Christ, let him not approach him, because in that case he will hear, on the day of judgement, those words: My friend, how didst thou come to be here? And even though he may keep silent, his own conscience will be his accuser.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Justly called the Doctor of Grace. We shall give some brief extracts from two of his sermons which have application to this Sunday. PL. 38, 559-567; and 38, 729-736.)

i. *The representative character of the man who was cast out:*

What? you may say. There was only one of these men there, and it is not so strange that one should have slipped past the servants of the father of the family without a wedding garment. Listen carefully and you will see that this one man represents a whole class; in reality there were many like him . . . observe, brethren, that the servants are only told to bring them all in, good or bad; they were not told to do any more. It is not said that the servants looked with attention at the guests and found one there without a wedding garment and said to him. . . . No, that is not said. It is the father of the family who discovers him and questions him, who finds him out and separates him. . . . Such was the quality of the questioner that all excuses were of no avail. It was no exterior garment which he lacked, but one of the heart. If it had been an exterior one the servants would have noticed it. . . . It was the Master himself who saw what the servants could not see....

What then is the wedding garment? This garment—let there be no doubt about it—is that which only the good who were admitted to the feast could wear, reserved for that banquet where no bad men can take their place. These, who are to be admitted, by the grace of



God, to the second banquet, are those who have the wedding garment. Let us see, then, who they are among the faithful who have something which the evil have not, and that will be the wedding garment. If we should say, the sacraments, then see how they are common to good and bad. Is it baptism? Without baptism, it is true, no one can attain God, but then, neither do all the baptized attain him. We cannot understand by baptism the wedding garment; that is a garment which I find on good and bad alike. Perhaps it is the altar or, rather, what is received there? But, as we see, many of those who eat, do so to their own condemnation. What will it be, then? Fasting? But the evil also fast. Going to church? The evil do that too. The working of miracles? The evil do that as well....

What is this wedding garment then? This: The end at which our warning aims is charity, based on purity of heart, on a good conscience and a sincere faith (1 Tim. 1. 5). Here is the wedding garment. It is not any kind of charity, for at times it would seem that there is also love between men who are accomplices in an evil conscience. Those who join together for robbery ... no, this is the true charity, which, if I speak tongues of men and angels and have it not, I am as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal....

2. *Grace:*

It is a thing to be wondered at that, hearing the crucified Christ preached to them, one will shrug his shoulders, while another will clutch the plank of salvation. The one who refuses it, let him accuse himself; the one who clutches it, let him not take to himself the praise. You have heard the Master of truth say: No one can come to me unless it were given him by my Father. Let him, then, give thanks to God, the giver of gifts, with humility and not with a proud heart; lest he lose by pride what he gained by humility. If those who walk the path of justice attribute it to themselves, then they leave that road. That is why the Scriptures, in an attempt to teach us this humility, tell us, with the apostle, to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. And so that no one should take it on himself because of the word *work*, he adds: Both the will to do it and the accomplishment of that will are something which God accomplishes in you ... (Phil. 2. 12 ff.).

3. *And perseverance:*

You may say: I am now walking that road; I had to know of it, the law was necessary to know how to act; but now, lord of my own free will, who can remove me from it? If you read the Scriptures with meditation you will see how a certain individual began to pride himself on the abundance of his riches, which he had received; but the merciful God, in order to teach him humility, took them away. The man, finding himself once more in misery, remembered the past and confessed the mercy of God: I said, in the time of my good

fortune: I shall never be moved. Yes, I said it, but then he adds: Every man is a liar (Ps. 29. 7 and 115. 2)....

There are men, ungrateful in the sight of grace, who concede too much to weak human nature, wounded as it is. Undoubtedly, the power of free will was great when it was first created ; but that power was lost by sin. Then he fell into the hands of death, he was weakened and the robbers left him by the side of the road, half dead. The passing Samaritan put him on his beast and he is still taking him to the inn, even now! Of what can he be proud? He is still under treatment. Can he say: it is enough for me to have received baptism and the pardon of my sins ? \ATiat! Because his iniquity was washed away there has the illness ceased ? I received the remission of all my sins. Exactly. In baptism all your sins have been washed away, all of them; words, acts, thoughts—all have been destroyed. But this is not more than the oil and wine which were poured into the wounds by the wayside. . . . The baptized has had his sins forgiven, but he has to recover from his weakness in the inn. Does not this inn suggest to us the Church ? . . .

#### 4. *The last favour granted by grace:*

Lastly, after freeing us from all corruption, what remains except the crown of glory? Yes, that is all that remains; but that crown will not rest easily on a swollen head. . . . Yes, you will say; but I have merited it; that crowning is the reward for my efforts, a debt which is owed to me, a gift given to me. Listen once more, listen to the voice of the psalmist who says : All men are liars, and then see what God says: He crowns you through his mercy and piety. Therefore the crown of justice is also the crown of mercy, crown of piety, because you did not deserve to be called, nor did you deserve justification after your call, nor your glory after justification. A remnant has remained true; grace has chosen it. And if it is due to grace, then it is not due to observance of the law (Rom. 11. 6).... God says to you : Consider well your merits, and you will find that they are my gifts.

### III. ST GREGORY THE GREAT

(Summan' of his Homily 38. PL. 76. 1281-1293)

- i. The soul of the just may be called a heaven because it has no desire for earthly things, and the Church, the union of the just, is therefore rightly called the kingdom of heaven.

The King, that is the Eternal Father, celebrated the marriage of his Son when he wedded him to human nature in the womb of Man. The first group of messengers were the prophets, the second the apostles.

To give oneself over with too much eagerness to worldly pursuits is to go into the country; and to seek the profit which comes from them is to give oneself over to business or trading, because those who do these things are careless about the way they meditate on and live in conformity with the mystery of the Incarnation, and in practice it is just as if they refused the invitation to the wedding....

We have an obligation of putting up with those who are evil and of praying for them, because the Church is like the ark of Noe which was wide beneath so that it could shelter all kinds of beasts, while the top part was narrow, in which only the patriarch dwelt. Our present banquet has a lower and a wider section, in which even carnal men are tolerated, since the spiritual are more hard to find; therefore the part which holds them is narrower. It is a broad gate and a wide road that leads to perdition ... but how small is the gate, how narrow the road that leads to life (Matt. 7. 13-14).

2. And what is the meaning of the wedding garment? We cannot say that it means baptism or faith, because who can enter into this wedding feast without them?... Therefore what can we understand by it except charity? He enters, but has no wedding garment who, belonging to the Church and having faith, has not charity. Rightly do we say that this garment is charity, because our Creator had it when he came to espouse himself to his Church. Only the love of God could have brought about the union of his Son with the souls of his elect. That is why St John says that God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son (3. 16). On that occasion he who came to men by charity gives us to understand that this garment is none other than charity. So it is that all who are baptized and have faith enter in, but he does not wear the proper garment who has not charity. If anyone is invited to a wedding he changes his clothes and tries to show, by his garments, that he rejoices together with the bride and groom. He would be ashamed to appear before the other guests in dirty clothes. We assist at the divine wedding feast, yet we are reluctant to change the clothes of our heart. The angels rejoice when the elect enter heaven. What do we think of these heavenly things, we who have not the wedding garment, which is charity? That is the one thing which can make us beautiful in the eyes of the Lord.

3. Let us be always mindful of the fact that charity is based on a double precept, that of love for God and for our neighbour. We must also notice that, when it is question of our love for the neighbour, we are given a weight and measure—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; but when it is a question of the love we should have for God there is no limit, since we are told to love him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Only he really loves God who does not think of himself. . . . For that reason the Jews were



told to dye the curtains of the tabernacle twice. You, dear brethren, are like the curtains of the tabernacle, since you hide within your hearts the heavenly mysteries, through faith. But the curtains must be twice dyed ; therefore, so that your charity may be twice dyed it must be inflamed with the love for God and your neighbour, and in such a way that you do not abandon the contemplation of God because of compassion for your neighbour; nor do you allow the contemplation of divine things to distract you from that compassion. Every man who lives among men must seek whom he loves in such a way that he does not abandon him with whom he travels, and must give his help to others in such a way that he does not separate himself from him towards whom his activity is directed.

The love we owe to our neighbour is divided into two precepts, because we read in the Scriptures : Never use another as thou wert loth thyself to be used (Tob. 4. 16), and Jesus said : Do to other men all that you would have them do to you (Matt. 7. 12).

Therefore, if we do to others what we would have them do to us, and if we avoid doing to others what we would not like to have done to ourselves, then we preserve the rights of charity. But do not let anyone think that, just because he loves his neighbour, therefore he has charity. First let him examine the strength of his love. Because if anyone loves others, but does not love them for God, then he has not charity, no matter what he thinks. True charity exists when one loves others for and in God and our enemies for God's sake. He loves his neighbour for God's sake who knows how to love those who do not love him; because charity is proved only by its contrast to hatred. That is why the Lord tells us to love those who hate us. He loves with complete security who loves those who do not love him. These are great and even sublime precepts, and at times difficult to observe; but they are the ones which signify the wedding garment. Anyone who enters into the feast without them must be afraid that he will be thrown out on the entrance of the king. . . .

4. Then they will bind hand and foot the man who does not wish, here and now, to free himself from the bonds of evil deeds and amend his life. In other words, the punishment will later bind those who are here and now bound by guilt. The feet which now refuse to visit the sick and the hands which will not help the needy are now, of their own will, free from the bonds of good works. Those who now freely bind themselves with the chains of vice will later, and against their will, be bound by the punishment. Rightly it is said that they are cast out into the outer darkness, since we understand by that darkness which is within the blindness of the heart, while we understand by the exterior darkness the night of eternal damnation. It is not said that he will be cast into the interior darkness, but to that which is without; because he is hurled into eternal condemnation who, of his own free will, falls into blindness of heart.

5. But, after the condemnation of this one, who represents all sinners, there is a general condemnation too. Many are called, but few are chosen. That is a terrible phrase, dear brethren. Consider it well; we who have been called by faith, assist at the wedding feast of the heavenly king, we believe and confess his Incarnation, we share in the divine banquet; but the king will enter in on the day of judgment. We know that we have been invited, but we do not know if we will be part of the chosen ones. Above all it is necessary to humble ourselves, more so since we do not know if we are among the elect. Some there are who have never even begun to do good works; others began, but did not persevere in that road. There are those who have been evil almost all their lives, but who, at the very end, are sincerely sorry and do penance. There are others, on the contrary, who apparently live a life of virtue, but who end by falling into evil ways. Some begin well and end better; others begin with evil and go steadily worse as they grow older. Let each one fear, then, because no one knows what is to come and we must all think carefully all the time about those words. Many are called, but few are chosen.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### i. *Grace:*

The word can have three meanings; first the love of one person for another, as we say that a soldier has won the favour of the king; secondly, a gift or favour freely given, for example, I will do you this favour. Third, the manifestation of gratitude for the favour received. The three meanings are connected intimately, because love moves us to make gifts and the gifts are a motive for thanks.

If we keep to the first meaning it is important to examine the difference between divine and human love. Man loves that which is good, and therefore his love presumes the good in the thing or person loved. On the other hand, since all the good we possess comes from God, we can never say that our goodness has awakened his love, but that, on the contrary, his love for us has been the reason why he has been moved to give us his gifts. God gives good things to those whom he loves.

There are two kinds of divine love, one common to all and one very special. What is the difference between them? It lies in the different kind of good which he gives us through his love. To all creatures he gave their being, and this is a kind of love. But to others he gives something more; he draws them nearer to himself and gives them a share in infinite good, and this is a love which is so great that it is eternal, it is the love of himself in the soul to which he grants it.



The conclusion is that the love of God puts something into the soul he loves; his ordinary love gives them their being; this one gives them a new and a supernatural gift, which is also divine (1-2. q. no, a. 1).

*2. The gifts of God:*

These may be passing helps so that man may do some good action, such as knowing some truth or willing some good. These helps are simple illuminations or movements, but sanctifying grace is something very different.

In the natural order, he did not limit himself to giving them his help so that they could act; he also gave them a nature and powers from which those acts could flow'. God would not be less provident in the supernatural order; therefore apart from helping man to do supernatural acts, he has infused into him the power of the virtues and interior grace. Grace is, therefore, a quality given to the soul.

In the supernatural order grace is anterior to the virtues which are infused with it, destined to help it to act in accordance with that new order in which grace places it.

*3. The manner:*

If we consider only the manner in which things are done, then creation is the greatest of God's works, since it is a passage from non-being to being. But if we think of the effects produced, then grace is very much superior to all the other effects produced by God, because all the rest are in the natural order; but in this one God gives us something which is supernatural.

Therefore the task of translating a man from the state of nature to that of grace is something more excellent than the creation of the whole universe, because heaven and earth will pass, glory will not.

We may even establish another comparison, saying that the giving of grace to one who has not got it is superior to the giving of glory to one who is just, because the latter has merited glory and there was a proportion between his works, lifted up to the supernatural order, and the reward he receives; proportion and merits which are not there in the one who receives grace for the first time (1-2. q. 113. a. 9).

*4. Grace and sin:*

Grace is an effect of the love of God. Sin breaks this love, and therefore its effects cease (a. 2).

The reward of sin is eternal condemnation; while grace makes us worthy of eternal glory. Therefore they are incompatible, and when sin appears, grace must vanish (2-2. q. 24. a. 12).

Grace and charity are either identified or go hand in hand. He who is in a state of grace must love God above all things. Sin, on the other hand, contradicts this state of grace in its very nature, because he who breaks the law of God is opposed to his will and to his love.



If grace depended on us as something proper to us, we could take it up or lay it down of our own will, without the committing of an act contrary to it supposing its definite loss. He who has a habit does not lose it just because he acts contrary to it on some occasions. But since it is a gift we receive from God, it must needs vanish as soon as we place an obstacle in the way of its communication, just as the eye ceases to see if we set up a screen to obscure the light. Sin is an obstacle from the very moment when a man breaks his friendship with God, whom he refuses to obey (*ibid.*).

5. *The Eucharist, a banquet:*

The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world (John 6. 52). The effects of this sacrament are derived from:

(a) the fact that it contains Christ, who, just as he came in a visible manner into this world to bring it life, so he comes invisibly in a sacramental manner, to bring man the life of grace. He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.

St Cyril says: The Word who gives life, on joining himself to our flesh and making it his own, also gave it life. It was convenient then that he should unite himself to us in his sacred flesh and precious blood which we receive in the living blessing of bread and wine.

(b) from the fact that it is a representation of the passion of Christ and effects in man what that passion effected for the whole world. It is as though he who communicates were to put his lips to the wound in the sacred side of Christ.

(c) from the symbolic form in which it is administered. Just as bodily food sustains life, gives growth, restores and delights, so the Eucharist produces these same effects in the spiritual life. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

(d) because of the symbolism of unity. Just as the bread unites various grains of wheat and the wine many grapes, this sacrament is that of piety, sign of unity, bond of charity (3. q. 79. a. 1).

6. *Giving eternal life:*

If we insist on the reasons already given, we shall see that the Eucharist leads us to eternal life, which is the purpose of Christ, of his passion, of true unity with God and of this food which in heaven will be perfect. Men desire to eat and drink so that they may never hunger or thirst again, were it possible, something which can only be done through this food, which renders those who receive it immortal and incorruptible in the company of the saints in peace and perfect unity.

The passion of the Lord, whose power is communicated to this sacrament, is sufficient cause of glory, to which, however, it does not lead us immediately, since it is convenient for us first to suffer with Christ that we may then be glorified with him. Nor does this sacrament introduce us at once into glory, but its effect is to lead us there

by the strength it gives us, through which it has the name of *viaticum*, Elias, who, after eating and drinking, could walk for forty days and nights to Mount Horeb, is a figure of the Eucharist (*ibid.* a. 2. ad *turn*).

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

(Extracts from the chapter on the divine plan for our adoption—an effect of grace. Cf. *Christy the Life of the Soul*, chap. I.)

How does God fulfil this magnificent design by which he wills us to have a part in this life which exceeds the capacities of our nature and surpasses its rights and proper energies, which none of its exigencies require, but which, without destroying this nature, fill it with bliss unimagined by the human heart? How will God cause us to enter into the ineffable 'fellowship' of his divine life so that we may partake of eternal beatitude? By adopting us as his children.

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With a will infinitely free, but full of love: *Secundum propositum voluntatis suae*, God has predestined us to be not only creatures, but his children . . . thus to share in his divine nature. God adopts us as his children. What does St Paul mean by this ?

What is human adoption ?

It is the admission of a stranger into a family. By adoption the stranger becomes a member of the family, he takes the name and receives the titles of this family, he has the right to inherit its possessions. It is necessary for the one who is adopted to be of the same race as the one who adopts. To be adopted by man, it is necessary to be a member of the human race. Now' we, who are not of the race of God, who are poor human creatures, by nature further from him than the animal is from man, we who are infinitely distant from God, *hospites et animae*, how' can we be adopted by him ?

Here is a marvel of the Divine wisdom, power and goodness. God gives us a mysterious share in his Nature which we call grace. *Efficiamini divinae consortes naturae*.

Grace is an interior quality, produced in us by God, inherent to the soul, adorning it and making it pleasing to God, just as in the natural domain, beauty and strength are qualities of the body, genius and science are qualities of the mind, loyalty and courage are qualities of the heart.

According to St Thomas, this grace is a participated similitude of the divine nature.... Grace makes us share in the nature of God in a way we cannot fathom. We are raised above our nature by grace; we become in some manner gods. We do not become equal, but like



to God; that is why our Lord said to the Jews: Is it not written in your law: I said, you are gods ?

For us, participation in the Divine life is brought about by grace, by virtue of which our souls become capable of knowing God as God knows himself, of loving God as God loves himself, of enjoying God as he is filled with his own beatitude, and thus living the life of God himself.

Such is the ineffable mystery of our Divine adoption. But there is a profound difference between Divine and human adoption. The latter is only exterior, fictitious. Certainly, it is established by a legal document, but it does not penetrate the nature of the one who is adopted. On the contrary, in adopting us, in giving us grace, God penetrates to the depths of our nature; without changing what is essential to the order of this nature, he raises it by this grace to the point of making us truly children of God. This act of adoption has so much efficacy that we become, through grace, partakers of the divine nature. And, as participation in the divine life constitutes our holiness, this grace is called sanctifying.

The consequence of this divine decree of our adoption, of this loving predestination by which God wills to make us his children, is to give a special character to our holiness. This character is that our holiness is supernatural.

The life to which God raises us is supernatural, that is to say, exceeding the capacities, the strength and exigencies of our nature. Hence, it is no more as simple creatures that we must be holy, but as children of God, by acts animated and inspired by grace.

Grace becomes the principle of divine life in us. What is it to live ? For us, to live is to move in virtue of an interior principle, the source of actions which tend to the perfection of our being. Another life is grafted, so to speak, upon our natural life, a life of which grace is the principle: grace becomes in us the source of actions and operations which are supernatural and which tend towards a divine end, namely, one day to possess God, to rejoice in him, as he knows himself and rejoices in his perfection.

This point is of capital importance. God might have been content to accept from us the homage of a natural religion; it would have been the source of a human, natural morality, of a union with God conformable to our nature as reasonable beings, founded upon our relations as creatures with our Creator, and our relations with our kind.

But God did not wish to limit himself to this natural religion. We have all met men who were not baptized, but who were, however, straightforward, loyal, upright, equitable, just and compassionate, but that can only be natural goodness. Without rejecting it (on the contrary) God is not content with it. Because he has decided to make us share in his infinite life, in his own beatitude—which is for us a



supernatural end—because he has given us his grace, God demands that our union with him should be a supernatural union, a holiness which has his grace for principle.

Apart from this plan, there is, for us, only eternal loss. God is master of his gifts, and he has decreed from all eternity' that we shall only be holy in his sight, by living through grace as children of God.

## II. BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

*(Meditations for Layfolk, pp. 170-171.)*

Grace, as its name implies, is a free gift of God. It can be merited only because God has made it meritable. The very possibility of its acceptance is itself a grace, which no merit can acquire. It is the gift of God which is only given to us to draw us on to God himself. Its reason lies in the Beatific Vision, for its only purpose is to lead us to that. God, in effect, created man for the joy of heaven. Of hell it is distinctly affirmed by Christ our Lord that it was made for the devil and his angels, whereas of heaven he declares that it is the kingdom prepared for men. This, of course, should not be taken as implying that Heaven exists for man only, or primarily, since its essential act is merely the contemplation of the Eternal Beauty, the ravishing Vision of power, Wisdom, Love in perfect harmony, the adequate knowledge of the ever-blessed Three-in-One. But all that we really mean is that God created man for the ultimate enjoyment of himself. Each individual whom God calls into the world has his destined place in the economy of the divine plan. That place is the direct result of God's own decrees, so that the good are predestined to the happiness of eternal life. This decree of God is the first act, if one can suppose a first act in that which knows no sequence; then by a subsequent act of God's Providence men's lives are arranged for their final reward or failure.

Grace, therefore, is ordained to nothing else than the ultimate purpose of man's creation. It is the free help of God whereby we each of us achieve his final predestination. Man was intended from the first to be raised to a supernatural order, i.e. God created Adam so that he should know his Maker, not in the mere material sense in which our natural human wit can discern his traces in the physical and intellectual universe, but with that ineffable intuition resulting in a participation in the Divine Nature. For Scripture insists, with a monotony that is almost wearisome, that the effect of grace is to make us the very mates of God. All who do justice are born of God; All who are born of God do not sin, for the generation of God preserveth them; the Father gave it to us that we should be called and should be the children of God. It is in this sense that the Fathers understood these texts and the famous words of St Peter, wherein

he expressly describes the effect of the promises of God as making us partakers of the divine nature. St Cyril of Alexandria specially declares that by grace there shines in our soul the mark of the substance of God. This grace, therefore, is ordained to glory. He created us for himself, and had held out to us his helping hand to reach to the heights of that contemplation. Grace, in other words, is the means whereby we are made conscious of that other world and enabled eventually to attain it, not by our natural powers, but by God's free gift.

I have, therefore, to realize that this grace lies entirely in his hands. The knowledge of the wonderful heights to which I can climb must necessarily enlarge considerably the sense of my own dignity. The fact that I am made a partaker of the divine nature should influence me to respond to the place to which I am called. It should add to my view of the world, others' souls, of the infinite reverence due even to the most sordid and miserable child of the human race. We are all by this grace partakers one with another in the very substance of God. But while in this way giving me a nobler appreciation of my vocation as a human being, and extending my importance in my own spiritual estimation, I must remember that it is all his doing and none of my own. He has, indeed, permitted me to merit certain graces, which for all my merit still remain his gifts; but certain others can never be the wage of goodness, only an added gratuity due to his generous condescension to my poverty. But the chief view I must take of it all is the consciousness that I am made for him; consequently, every time I realize he has been helping me, I must redouble my efforts to reach him. Each grace is not to be rested in, but made a stepping stone to the next grace. The grace of faith, for example, is but the beginning of life, not its end. It is but an illumination whereby I am made conscious that he calls me higher; and the daily blessings of health, friends, work, the beauty of nature, and arts and crafts, have to be viewed as daily-given helps to reach his side.

### HI. DAVID GREENSTOCK

(Extracts from *Be ye Perfect*, chapter on the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity through grace.)

The soul in a state of grace is no mere passive recipient of the divine action; on the contrary, it flourishes under God's hand to such an extent that it develops a supernatural vitality which has, as its crowning glory in this life, the presence of indwelling of the Trinity in the soul, as something which the soul itself possesses. As we know, the rational creature, even if left in the purely natural order, could have known God in some fashion and could have loved him.



But in that case, this rational creature would not have possessed God within himself. I can know something and love it, but that knowledge is merely an idea of the thing which I have in my mind, and that love is only an appreciation of it and an affection for it. I cannot say with truth that because of my knowledge and love I really possess the object I know and love in its physical reality. For that real possession something more is needed, union between myself and the thing which I know and love. Why, then, should grace bring about this substantial union ?

In the first place, grace lifts the soul up to a divine level and thus makes man a member of God's family, a son by adoption, with the right to the beatific vision, the sight of God face to face. But grace does still more for man than this, because, together with it, God infuses into the soul the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These are meant for action, and supernatural action at that. Thus it is that through faith I can attain to God in a certain measure by my intellect, and to those intimate mysteries of his inner life which he has deigned to reveal to mankind ; and by charity I can also love God as he is in himself, one in nature and three in Persons. If that were all, then I still could not be said to possess God as a reality within my soul, because, as in the case of my natural knowledge and love, my faith would still be belief in something outside myself, and my love would still be the appreciation and affection for someone outside myself. But here another element comes to our aid. By the ordinary presence of immensity these three Persons of the Trinity are already in my soul as identified with the divine essence and its power, which is always active there. Consequently, these virtues of faith and charity terminate in the three Persons, not as outside myself, but as already there under another guise. Since this new knowledge by faith is something that is not possible in the merely natural order, and this love of God through the virtue of charity could never be accomplished without the aid of God raising my will out of the natural into the supernatural order, a new and intimate relation is established between the soul and God, and this is the presence of indwelling. There is a relation *of one* knowing to the thing known, and also of the lover with the beloved, and that new relation is the real intimate cause of this presence of indwelling.

Through the gifts of the Holy Ghost this presence gives rise to a certain quasi-experimental type of knowledge of God, even in this life, which can extend from the most imperfect grade in which these acts of knowledge and love are purely habitual (for instance, in children before the age of reason) to the highest of all, the beatific vision of God face to face. Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical on the Holy Ghost, says: This wonderful union which is properly called indwelling differs only in degree or state from that with which God beatifies the saints in heaven.



This special presence of indwelling is the great patrimony of the spiritual life, both in this world and in the world to come. For our spiritual development we must notice that this presence brings our final end into our grasp in some fashion even in this life. It is true that our knowledge of God in this life is through the veil of faith, but that is a necessary condition of our time of probation here below, and in no way detracts from the reality of this presence. God is with us, whether we actually see him or not. However, the great virtue of charity, or the love of God, does not suffer from the limitations of faith, as we shall see. On the contrary, it leaps all obstacles, and reaches out to love God as he is in himself, a fact which is the main reason for the superiority of charity over the other theological virtues. One day, if we are faithful to the graces God gives us, the limits imposed by the veils of faith will be removed, and we shall see God face to face.

Therefore there is and always will be, an intimate relation between the basic notion of perfection in general and the supernatural indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul. By grace we are lifted up to God's level and become members of the divine family, being made sons and heirs of God. Through the virtues we are given the necessary powers to perform supernatural actions which can attain the end for which God has destined us. But through this indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul that final end of our perfection is actually possessed by us even in this life, and thus we can truly say that we have here below, in a certain measure, our eternal reward. Granted, we can still lose it by mortal sin 'which, by depriving the soul of grace, takes from it this inestimable presence; but we have it within our grasp while we are in the state of grace. We possess God and attain to him through our operations. Since this indwelling is verified in every soul that is illuminated by the life of grace, it does not depend on the grade or degree of that grace, although we can increase in our appreciation of that presence according as our life of grace increases. It is thus an essential part of that perfection which is possessed by all who are in a state of grace, from the newly baptized child, not yet capable of the use of reason, to the greatest saint who lives in ever growing union with that presence.

From what has been said already it should be much easier to grasp what is meant when we say that there is a real friendship between the soul in grace and God. Friendship always tends towards union with those who are the object of our friendship. God's love for man is so great that he has chosen to give himself in intimate union with man through the gift of grace. We live in God; we know him as he is in himself, and we have also the power to love him, not as one loves a person who is absent, but as one loves and enjoys the presence of an intimate friend who lives in the same house. This friendship can be made still more intimate through an increase of sanctifying grace in

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the soul, and thus it is that St Paul prays for his converts that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts ; that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth. To know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all understanding, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God (Eph. 3.17-19).

## IV. BOSSUET

(In this sermon, which was preached during the second week of Lent, Bossuet speaks of the glories and pleasures of this world, and how they can lead a man away to such a degree that death takes him by surprise while he is still in sin. The theme is a useful one for this Sunday also.)

It is a deceit of painters and poets to present a dying man to us as changing the whole of his life; something which inclines us to leave it until that last moment to bring about our conversion. What a mistake! Death is not something distinct from life, it is a life which is drawing to its close, just as in the theatre the persons who appear in the last act are those who also appeared in the first. The flood waters which pour into the sea are those which have devastated the fields.

The man who is desirous of ambitions and honours does not belong to God, but to them; and the weight of his business and anxieties means that he does not even belong to himself, but to them. When the last hour of his life comes it is a very difficult thing for him to rid himself of them, because such a crude break with the past is not possible at one blow. He needs time for a great task such as this, and the minutes slip through his fingers. He will need a special help from God, and the hardness of his heart makes him unworthy of such help.

Abundance, riches, a delicate and pleasure-filled life are often compared in the Scriptures to a river in flood; waters which pull everything along with them. Truly, the man who gives himself up to the world and its riches is a poor slave, bound in chains.

It is a grave error to suppose that abundance of riches leave the soul more free; money is not water that quenches thirst of avarice, the more we have of it the more we want. . . . Since this is not easy to understand, let us think a little on the use he usually makes of his riches who considers himself to be moderate.

The rich man in the gospel story was not condemned for adultery, theft or violence, but for his delicate way of life. . . . O Lord, what a narrow road this is, on which we cannot even use what is lawful! But do not doubt about it, listen to the words of the Lord: No man can serve two masters. The heart which is too attached even to what is lawful, should it give itself up entirely, now no longer

belongs to God, and therefore its attachment is subject of condemnation, even though it may be concerned with innocent things. O you rich of this world, how I am afraid for you when I hear these words.

It is impossible for one who is not careful about these lawful things to keep merely to them and not take the further step towards those which are forbidden. . . . From all this we may deduce that, unless God works a miracle, it is difficult for the licentious life of the rich to have any limits. The rich man has everything and easily desires everything, and from this come great sins. Such men are not content that their sins should be tolerated, or even excused; they want to be applauded. . . .

The hour of death comes; have no illusions about it, it is difficult for a life to change in a moment, and if being aware that these are his last moments, the rich is converted, I doubt very much the sincerity of that conversion. Because I am afraid that the movements of his heart are more artificial than real. Death can bring greater attachment to things, because of the fear of having to give them up. I suspect that a great number *of* these repentances are nothing but false promises, to obtain from God bodily health. O penance unrepented! Penance infected with the love of this world!

One of the greatest misfortunes in this life is the anxiety with which we live it, which soon makes a man deaf to the voice of God. You will hear them say, day after day, that they can never find a moment to rest and that the hours slip through their fingers without leaving them any time to think of the health of their soul.

It always seems to me that the cause of this rushing about is due to ambition, because truly man's ambition is infinite. If a man has some office he desires another, without ever coming to the end of this race, since it is his own character and desires which open the way for it; and it is the world which, not being able to give us any more, deceives us with false hopes. . . . I will tell you the reason for this lack of peace in spirit, this longing for novelties and impatience. Life is activity, and since the worldly and dissipated know nothing of the efficacy of that quiet activity of the interior life of the soul, they think that they can only attain it by rushing about violently, noisily, losing themselves in a maze of visits and intrigues. One complains that he has to work too much, another that he cannot get rid of business cares; take no notice of them; they enjoy their servitude and do not know how to live without it. They are like the trees, says St Augustine, who think themselves to be free in their movements, when it is the wind which is moving them.

I would address these great business men, possessors of all kinds of secrets, personages without whom the comedy of this life cannot continue; and I would say to them: How much time is left to you, to think of the most serious business of all, that of eternity? See that the time is short and the days fly past. Death is knocking on your



door and will one day break in, even if you refuse to open to him, to cany you before your judge. . . . That audience is almost ready, but how little time remains for you to prepare yourself, in the midst of your vain and useless occupations. The time is coming when the sun will no longer measure the days and years, because God himself will measure them by his eternity'. I see you there, astonished in the presence of your judge; but come out of your daze for a moment to look at your accusers; the poor it is who will rise up against you with inflexible harshness. . . .

The man who loves pleasures is a hard-hearted man. This is a harshness which is capable of producing robbers who do not steal and assassins who do not kill. All the Fathers are in agreement that the rich man in the story robbed poor Lazarus because he did not clothe him, and cut his throat because he denied him food. What a killing harshness, bom of abundance and delights! O Lord, was not this the very reason why you gave to die great ones of the earth a ray of your power! You made them rich to serve the poor; your providence was careful to keep that evil from them so that they might think of the misfortunes of the poor; you gave them ease and liberty so that they might dedicate it to the sendee of your sons; and their power has made them disdainful, their abundance has dried up their mercy', their happiness has made them insensible to the sight of the poor and miserable weeping at their gates.

I am not surprised that they do not hear the cries of the poor without, because they have others poor and miserable within their hearts which do not cease to cry' out—their passions.

See the state of the world today; we have known peace and war, health and great epidemics. It would seem as if God had exhausted all the means to call out to us. We might say that on all sides we can hear voices reproaching us before God and men for all the pleasures we allow our senses. Let no one ask how far the obligation binds us to help the poor, because hunger has put an end to all controversy and despair has finished all arguments. We have reached the extreme cases in which, as the Fathers and theologians tell us, if we do not help the poor according to our means, then we shall be guilty of their death and we shall have to render an account to God for their blood, their souls, and all those excesses to which the fury of hunger and despair may drive them.

#### V. ROYO MARIN, O.P.

(Summary of the doctrine on Hell in his book *Teologia de la Salvacion*, BAC, Madrid.)

##### i. *The eternity of hell:*

The most impressive thing which can be said of hell is that its pains are eternal and that, consequently, they will never have an end.

This is a fact which forms part of the deposit of faith. It is stated clearly in Sacred Scripture and in the magisterium of the Church. There is no escape from this inexorable truth.

Perhaps no one has found a better way of expressing, both dramatically and from the literary point of view, this terrible truth than the immortal genius of the *Divine Comedy*. Guided by Virgil, Dante arrives at the gates of hell and writes these words about what he saw on the door:

Through me the road to the city of desolation,  
through me the road to sorrows diutemal,  
through me the road among the lost creation.

Justice moved my great maker: God eternal  
wrought me; the power, and the unsearchably  
high wisdom, and the primal love supernal.

Nothing ere I was made was made to be  
save things eteme, and I eterne abide;  
lay down all hope, you that go in by me.

Let us explain, by the light of reason illuminated by faith, those arguments which make plain the convenience of the eternity of hell. ... But in any case, let us remember that divine things do not depend on our criterion or on our human acceptance of them, but on his inscrutable designs, full of goodness and mercy—in spite of all appearance to the contrary. Man can, if he so will, give a Voltairian laugh and reject the truths of faith; but what he can never do, no matter how he multiplies his jokings and jibes, is to remove one jot of truth from what God has revealed. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away. And Christ has told us in the Gospel of the sentence which he will pronounce against the wicked at the day of judgement; this and no other: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. God grant that those who now laugh at these truths may open their eyes in time, before they have to prove for themselves, in the eternal despair of hell, the truth and reality of them.

Theological reasoning tells us that the pains of hell cannot have an end except in the case of one of the three following hypotheses:

- i. because the sinner repents and is restored to grace;
- ii. because God pardons him his sins without penance or repentance;
- iii. because God wipes the sinner out completely from existence.

## 2. *First hypothesis:*

Repentance and rehabilitation of the sinner. This is condemned by the Church (Denz. 211) and is against reason:

- (a) because it contradicts the dogma of the eternity of hell;



(b) because the sinner cannot repent without a previous grace from God which he will never receive because grace ceases with time and life on earth ;

(c) the sufferings of the condemned are not meritorious—the root of merit is missing, i.e. sanctifying grace;

(d) because, as we shall see, the sinner in hell is so obstinate that he would reject grace were it offered to him ;

(e) because the very nature of eternity prevents any change with regard to our ultimate end, freely chosen at the moment of death.

### 3. *Second hypothesis:*

God's pardon. This also contradicts the eternity of the pain of hell and the attributes of God, which demand the eternity of hell.

#### (a) God's justice:

Sin implies an infinite malice, since it is committed against an infinite God. Man could not withstand a suffering which was infinite in intensity; therefore he must withstand what he can, an infinity in duration.

#### (b) Divine wisdom:

Revelation tells us that hell is eternal, and revelation is part of divine wisdom and will not, therefore, change. Nothing can happen now which God has not foreseen from all eternity; therefore his eternal decrees will be fulfilled inexorably.

#### (c) God's love:

This appears strange at first sight, but Dante saw it. Let us allow Lacordaire to explain it:

If it were *only justice* which had opened the abyss, there might still be a remedy for it; but it is also love, the first love, which has made it. This is the factor which excludes all hope. When one is condemned by justice, then he can appeal to love; but when one is condemned by love, to what can he appeal? That is the fate of the damned. That love which has given its life blood for them is the thing which condemns them. How can this be? Would God have come to dwell with us here below, to take our nature, speak our tongue, shake our hand, cure our wounds, raise our dead; would this God, I say, have exposed himself to the insults of the traitor, allowed himself to be tied to a pillar, cut into pieces by the lashes, crowned with thorns; would he have died for us on a cross, so that afterwards we could think that it was lawful to laugh and blaspheme, take part in all kinds of abominations? Oh no! Let us not deceive ourselves. Love is not a game. None is loved by God without some responsibility; much less a love which ends with the death on a cross. It is not justice which lacks mercy; it is love which condemns the sinner. Love—we have all experienced this—is life, or death. And if it is a case of divine love it is eternal life or eternal death.



In a word, God would not have punished the sinner so terribly unless he has first loved him so much; if he had not been so mad as to die for him on a cross!

4 *Third hypothesis:*

The destruction, complete and total of the damned. Again this would contradict the dogma of faith about the eternity of hell, and is absurd for the following reasons :

(a) It contradicts God's Wisdom:

God has created the human soul immortal; were he to reduce it to nothing that would imply a rectification of the natural order established by God. . . .

(b) It is against God's justice:

Justice demands that the sinner should be punished as long as he remains obstinate in his sin. Now, this obstinacy is an inevitable consequence of condemnation. The damned soul is not repentant and will never repent. Not merely because he lacks the grace of God to repent, but also because he would reject that grace angrily were it offered to him. In such a case divine justice itself impedes the destruction of the sinner, because in that case he would cease to suffer, and cease to be punished.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. THE EPISTLE

#### A: Be renewed

#### The word renewal in St Paul

1. It has a transcendental sense, related to the doctrine of the mystical body.
2. It supposes a new life in us, not a simple reform.

#### The various meanings of the word life

1. That of movement—the proper sense.
2. Vital operations, in which the principle of life is reduced to action.
3. Directive principle of vital operations.

#### The three meanings of renewal in St Paul

Applied to the three meanings of life:

- i. It can mean a new principle of movement, a new vital principle; the sharing in a higher life; the living under the influence of a life superior to ours. The sharing in a new spirit.

2. Paul's idea of renovation demands in us new vital operations:
  - (a) the principle of which is supernatural;
  - (b) the end, the last end ;
  - (c) share in the divine nature ;
  - (d) lifts all our actions up to a divine level ;
  - (e) life by faith—not by reason alone.

#### Union of two natures

It supposes in us the union of the divine and the human.

1. We share in the divine by grace; this comes from Christ; therefore we share in the life of Christ.
2. St Paul puts it very well in his letter to the Colossians: You have undergone death, and your life is hidden away now with Christ in God. Christ is your life, and when he is made manifest, you too will be made manifest in glory with him (3. 3-4).

#### A threefold renovation in Christ

This is because he is the directive principle of our operations in him:

1. His doctrine;
2. his life;
3. he is our hope (Phil. 1. 23; 3. 20).

#### Practical applications

1. If you are not living in a state of grace then the renewal means for you that you must put yourself in a state of grace as soon as possible. If you do not live in that state then you do not share in the life of Christ.
2. If you think that you are in a state of grace then the renewal means for you :
  - (a) that you follow the criterion of the Gospel, not that of the world ;
  - (b) that you adjust your life to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit;
  - (c) that you purify your intention, seeking in all things the greater glory of God ;
  - (d) that charity—the love of God—may inspire you in all things;
  - (e) that you live in Christ and for Christ and with Christ in all that you do.

#### B: Justice and truth

Justice supposes a certain relationship or equality; so does truth. The word truth has many meanings.

1. *The truth of life:*

Man in his life fulfils that to which he is ordained by the divine mind.

2. *Moral truth:*

When in his life, his deeds and his words, he shows himself to be what he is.

3. *The truth of justice:*

When a man fulfils what he owes to another.

4. *The truth of God:*

By which things are as the divine minds intends them to be.

### The truth of life

1. God has laid down the course of the life of every man from the first moment of eternity; and man's perfection depends on that, doing the will of God at every moment.

2. In Christ this perfection was obvious in a super-eminent way:

(a) I am consulting the will of him who sent me, not my own (Johns. 30).

(b) My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish the task he gave me (John 4. 34).

(c) I have exalted thy glory on earth, by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do (John 17. 4).

3. The eternal plan of God was realized in Christ (Eph. 3. 11).

4. The life of God is always true and just; that is why Christ is given the title of the Just One.

### Doing truth (Eph. 4. 15)

There is a truth which implies action:

1. A truth which is lived, as one lives life;

2. a truth which is made effective when we execute the divine will;

3. a truth such as that produced by a builder when he puts into effect the architect's plans. The perfect conformity between the plan and its execution, the thought and the effect of it in deeds.

4. To this truth Paul refers when he says: We are to follow the truth, in a spirit of charity . . . (Eph. 4. 15); and St John: The man whose life is true comes to the light, so that his deeds may be seen for what they are, deeds done in God (3. 21). Deeds done in God, perfectly accommodated to the divine plan for our lives.

### Works done in Christ

i. It would be more accurate to say that, because we are new creatures, created in Christ, in him we realize our supernatural life. St



Paul expresses it with wonderful precision when he says: No, we are his design; God has created us in Christ Jesus, pledged to such good actions as he has prepared beforehand, to be the employment of our lives (Eph. 2. 10).

2. It is as if there were a stairway leading us to God, the steps of which are made up of the good works which God has prepared so that we may put our feet on them one by one (Ps. 118. 59).

The new life

This is the life of the just; the new life in Christ, renewed in justice and truth.

1. *Let us live our life:*

(a) The phrase so often heard on the lips of youth: We want to live our own lives! But what meaning do they give to this phrase? It could be a symbol of sanctity, or of independence or of ignorance.

(b) On how many lips this cry means just the opposite to what it should mean.

i. *The life of the passions*, worldly vanity, according to the criterion of the world;

ii. *the life of all that is most base in man*, lacking in courage, a life imposed on us by others;

iii. *the life of sin*, in a word, of the devil and of pride.

2. *Be renewed:*

Live your lives, yes; but the lives which God has prepared for you.

(a) That which has been outlined from all eternity in the mind of God;

(b) that which will merit God's graces;

(c) that which is demanded by your minds, illuminated by faith; a life of sacrifice and self-denial.

3. *To live your life is to live for others, not for yourself:*

It is to live for Christ; it is to live dying to this world in order to attain the only true life, which is that of eternity.

C: Sanctity and truth

Justice and holiness

Justice of truth is not enough; there must be holiness of truth. It is not enough to fit our plan to that of God, without any inner spirit of holiness—such a life does not merit the name of justice. We must fit out life to God's plan, it is true, but not simply in order to obey the dictates of our reason; but because:

(a) God has laid it down thus;

(b) it is his will;

(c) we do it from the motive of the love of God; we must do the works of truth, but in charity.

### A pure and simple heart

1. The eye is the light of the whole body, so that if thy eye is clear, the whole of the body will be lit up (Matt. 6. 22). The eye is the intention, purity of intention.
2. Souls which act with this purity of intention and simplicity of heart can truly be said to walk in the light:
  - (a) they see things as they are ;
  - (b) they value them in relation to God;
  - (c) they see God in all things;
  - (d) they see the world bathed in the wisdom and providence of God;
  - (e) they enjoy a perpetual and serene joy, even though they may suffer—Sad, yet ever rejoicing, might be their slogan (2 Cor. 6. 10).

### Everything in the name of Jesus Christ

Whether we eat or drink—whatever we do, it must be done in his name and for him ; for Paul the great misfortune of the Gentiles was that they had to live without Christ (Eph. 2. 12).

### Perfect men

No longer like children, like ships driven hither and thither by any contrary wind—but rather perfect men in Christ.

1. In Christ and by him we are measured; we shall each reach the full measure of our perfection in Christ, for our own edification and that of our neighbour.
2. Until we are all one in the unity of faith and the knowledge of our divine sonship. So that we may all grow in all things in him who is our Head, Christ.

### A sad truth

How many Christians fail to practise this teaching, fail even to see its importance ?

1. Perhaps among simple souls more practise it than one would think; many of them have a pure intention and simplicity of heart.
2. But among the wise ones of this world how many are only seeking novelties, deceived by the false knowledge of the world, which only leads to pride and vanity ?
3. Yet there were never so many souls as now anxious to lead the life of perfection.
4. These souls should practise to the full the life in and with Christ:

- (a) by knowing what it means to renew themselves in justice and sanctity of truth ;
- (b) covering themselves with the wedding garment;
- (c) dressed in the garment of Christ.

## D : Work and alms

### 1. *Four motives for work:*

Work, says St Thomas, can be directed towards four ends:

- (a) towards earning the necessities of life ;
- (b) to avoid idleness ;
- (c) to kill the movements of concupiscence;
- (d) to obtain enough for the giving of alms.

### 2. *The virtue of work:*

It is a virtue. The characteristic of modern civilization is that things have never been better organized from the point of view of work, and the world has never produced more than it is doing at the moment.

### 3. *The spirit of work:*

- (a) In some the spirit of work is almost slavery ;
- (b) one might say that one part of the human society is forced to work without any joy in it or spontaneity;
- (c) in others work is motivated by avarice and greed.

### 4. *The Catholic teaching concerning work:*

- (a) Without going into the negative side of the picture, i.e. a condemnation of a wrong type of capitalism, we may concentrate on the positive side—the doctrine of the Church.
- (b) She has always condemned idleness;
- (c) she sanctifies work in the person of St Joseph ; a worker who lived by his labour;
- (d) she does the same in Jesus; he was the son of a worker and therefore a worker himself.

### 5. *St Paul—doctrine and example:*

- (a) In his writings to the Thessalonians he insists that those who have no other means of livelihood should work;
- (b) that no alms should be given to him who can work (2 Thess. 3- 10);
- (c) that working in an orderly fashion, in silence and peace, they should all earn their daily bread (2 Thess. 3. 12);
- (d) he holds himself up as a model, saying that he worked day and night so as not to be a burden on anyone (2 Thess. 3. 8) ;
- (e) when he is dealing with our new life in Christ and our moral condition as members of his Body he writes the verse we are now commentating. The man who was a thief must be a thief no longer;



let him work instead, and earn by his own labour the blessings he will be able to share with those who are in need (Eph. 4. 28);

(f) St Paul himself put this teaching into practice (Acts 20. 33-35).

6. *No peace without charity:*

It can never be stressed too much that social peace can never be won without a real pouring out of Christian charity, which is the practice of this Pauline teaching. There are so many in the world today who work like slaves so as to pile up wealth; when there are so many others who have not the means to live. The main rule seems to be, nowadays, to work as little as possible for as much as possible—and the devil take the hindmost!

Nowadays, more than ever, we need employers of labour who will see to it that there is a greater and more generous distribution of the results of the work of their employees; but on the other side there must be a real spirit of work, not an idleness which hides itself under the guise of labour.

## E: The excellence of grace

1. *Grace and salvation:*

The wedding garment is a symbol of charity, according to St Augustine and St Gregory, according to St Thomas and also according to Christ.

(a) No one can have a right to sit down at the heavenly banquet without it;

(b) therefore there is nothing so important for a man as to be in a state of grace. For this reason alone those words of St Thomas would be absolutely true: There is nothing in the whole created world which is worth so much in the eyes of God as a soul in grace (1-2. q. 113, a. 9. *ad 2um*).

2. *Excellence of grace in itself:*

Without thinking about the relation between it and our future happiness:

(a) it is greater than any created good—or all of them together;

(b) it is not possible for a man to work as hard as he can to retain it and increase it unless he has a right estimation of it. The life of the senses is very strong in all of us and drags us along with it. More reason why we should have a true appreciation of the worth of grace, so that the will, following the intellect, may be ready and willing to sacrifice the life of the senses on the altars of grace and the supernatural.

3. *Grace—above all created good:*

Heaven and the choirs of the angels cannot be compared to the man in a state of grace (St Augustine). How much less, then, the other created goods of earth!

St Thomas has no difficulty in saying that it is a greater thing to bring a sinner to repentance than to create heaven and earth (1-2. q. 113. a. 9).

**4. *Grace communicates its own greatness to the man who possesses it:***

An ancient philosopher is supposed to have said : Place me among fine objects of silver and gold, and they will not increase my estimation of myself, because they are outside me. Grace, on the other hand, does communicate its own excellence. The soul which possesses it becomes as great as grace itself. St Cyril of Alexandria says: We are, as it were, dressed in purple and fine linen through sanctifying grace, and lifted up to a dignity that surpasses all knowledge.

**5. *Man is the king of creation in the natural order:***

So it is said, but it is more strictly true in the supernatural order. Man in grace is infinitely superior to all other created things. He would be superior even to the angels if they had not grace.

**6. *Applications:***

Above all, let us be logical.

**(a) Are we persuaded of the truth of this doctrine ?**

Then, as a logical consequence, we must establish a scale of values to know how to renounce the inferior ones to gain or preserve the superior ones. Nothing and nobody should be allowed to deprive our soul of grace. We must be ready to sacrifice anything, even life itself, to preserve it; like the martyrs, convinced of its value.

**(b) The characteristic of the generous man is that he is enthusiastic about good things:**

A pure soul rarely desires vile or gross things, since it is the thought of an important enterprise which exalts and subjects him, says Seneca. We can substitute for generous the word virtuous.

**(c) The characteristic of the Christian should be:**

- i. to be enthusiastic about the most noble of all objects; grace;
- ii. the enterprise which must at all times hold him active is that of defending grace at all costs.

**F: A share in God's life**

**1. *The purity and beauty of the soul in grace:***

The wedding garment is an indispensable condition for entry into heaven. But it also purifies and beautifies the soul with a dazzling beauty. St Catherine of Siena, who once saw the soul of a converted sinner, now in grace, said : Father, if you could only see the beauty of the soul in grace you would give your life a hundred times were it necessary, to ensure your salvation.

The soul in grace is so beautiful because it reflects the very beauty of God himself.

(a) This is the primary and principal effect of grace; it is a sharing in the divine nature and life (2 Pet. 1. 4).

(b) All the Fathers are at one in declaring this precious union with God. St Denis says: Sanctifying grace is a divine gift, an imitation of the divinity and goodness of God which is the most excellent thing of all, in virtue of which, by a divine birth, we too have divine status.

(c) St Thomas says: By grace we are, as it were, made gods (1-2. q. no. a. 4. c).

### 3. *The mystery of grace:*

This making of the soul like God is at one and the same time the most mysterious and profound doctrine and also one of the most beautiful and tremendous.

(a) It is a work which is entirely supernatural, done by God himself, above all creation and its effects.

(b) It is a work of supernatural love and kindness, by which God gives his creature something worth infinitely more than even his nature.

(c) It is a very sea of supernatural gifts which are poured out from the bosom of the divinity on to God's creatures, to make them sharers in the very nature and the glory of God.

### 4. *The divinisation of man:*

By grace the creature is lifted up from his lowliness to the divine level, being transformed into his image and living by this spirit. The seal of the Trinity is impressed on the soul by this divine action, so that it is as though God's Son were born again in one of his creatures.

### 5. *The mystery:*

We must try to explain this mystery as simply as possible to the people, even though it is so ineffable and great that it defeats all explanation.

(a) The Fathers of the Church sought to do this in images and by examples:

i. Some use the image of a rich perfume which communicates its odour to all the things it touches;

ii. others compare the effects of grace to the drop of water which is mingled with wine so that it takes on its colour and smell;

iii. others use the image of the iron in the fire, which glows as if it were fire itself.

(b) The human soul retains all its own perfections:

But in grace it acquires another, being lifted up to be able to know and love God, to share in the very life of God.



6. *Recognize your dignity—here is your greatness:*

(a) Your life confused with that of God; your soul resplendent with the beauty of God; your body a temple of God.

(b) Recognize it and do not degrade yourself, by sin. Live by God and for God. That is the demand of grace.

G: Sons of God

1. *Another effect of grace:*

It has its symbol in the wedding garment, and is a consequence of the former, namely the share in the divine life: we become sons of God by adoption.

*God our Father:*

Many times in the Gospel Christ taught us that God is our Father:

(a) in the Our Father (Matt. 6. 9).

(b) ... is not your Father much more ready to give, from heaven, his gracious spirit to those who ask him ? (Luke 11. 13).

(c) I am going up to him, who is my Father and your Father (John 20. 17).

3. *Sons by adoption:*

See how God has shown his love towards us; that we should be counted as his sons, should be his sons (1 John 3. 1). He goes on to say: Beloved, we are sons of God even now, and -what we shall be hereafter, has not been made known as yet.

(a) Man could never have aspired to this dignity on his own; God would have to bring it about, through Christ, his Son by nature.

(b) God gave his Son to the world that the world might be saved by him, and this salvation was accomplished in a most astonishing manner, by adopting man as God's son. Thus Paul can say: Then God sent out his Son on a mission to us . . . and make us sons by adoption. To prove that you are his sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out in us, Abba, Father (Gal. 4. 4-6).

~~This~~ adoption was through and in Christ:

- i. by means of grace (John 1. 12);
- ii. the gift of the Spirit, by which we can cry out Abba, Father (Gal. 4. 4).

4. *Human and divine adoption:*

We are God's sons, and it is useless to seek an example from human adoption, because the divine act of adoption is far superior to it.

(a) In human adoption it is only the external goods, love, favour, inheritance, etc. which are communicated; humans cannot communicate their life, their blood.

(b) In divine adoption God gives us his goods and his inheritance (Rom. 8. 17). He gives us his love and favour; but he also gives us his life. We are born of God (John 1. 3).

*St Anselm's comparison:*

If a powerful king on this earth were to send for the least of his subjects, poor, abandoned, full of illness and ulcers, in the depths of misery; and if he were to clean him, dress him in purple, adopt him as a son, making him his heir. If he were to give him power in his kingdom and make all men obey him as a son, who could admire sufficiently the liberality thus shown, or even begin to understand it? By our very nature we are further from God than that subject of the king. The misery from which God has rescued us is greater than the one we have just described, and the glory reserved for us as far above that earthly kingdom as heaven is above the earth.

6. *Towards the Father:*

(a) Towards the Father, in love:

Who would not love him with all his strength? If all sons love their fathers, how much more should we love God!

(b) Towards him with confidence:

Thinking of him as a Father, who pays more attention to the good in us than to the bad; calling on him frequently as our Father.

(c) Towards him by our unconditioned service and fidelity:

A whole life given up to his service would not be enough to return the generous love of such a Father.

(d) Return to God who loves you . . .

Consecrate yourself to the honour of him who gave himself to such a humiliation for you. . . . Admit him as your Father who has given you birth through his love.

## H: God's friends

1. *Grace:*

Apart from the other effects we have mentioned, it makes us God's friends. Through grace is established between man and God a true friendship.

2. *Sons of God and friends of God:*

It would appear impossible to add anything to the fact that we are God's sons; yet the notion of friend conveys something which is not contained in that of sons.

(a) Between friends there is mutual love and one which is obvious, as there is between the soul in grace and God. It is the same love by which God adopts us and by which we call him Father. There is no love so great as that between father and son; and it is this same

love which is the foundation of the love of friendship between man and God.

(b) Let the love of friendship implies an intimacy which does not exist between father and son :

i. *from our true friends we have no secrets:* but there are many things we hide from our children;

ii. *a friend will pour out his heart to his friend:* we often have to pretend before our children ;

iii. *the word son implies subordination, inferiority:* that of friend, equality.

(c) Between God and man, together with the love of a Father, there is also the intimacy of friendship (John 15. 15).

### 3. *Human and divine friendship:*

The friendship between man and God cannot be compared to any human friendship.

(a) Between men at times there is no true friendship, only appearances :

It is founded on egoism, riches, personal proximity, at times self-interest. That is why we often find that the friend of today is the enemy of tomorrow'. Even between real friends there is often little compénétration.

(b) Supernatural friendship is very different; the love is sincere :

Through grace man has a share in the divine love, while God loves man with a love which is infinite. With that same love, through grace, man can love God.

(c) Our human friends often love us for their own ends or consolation :

God's friendship is very different. God cannot get any advantages out of our love, only the glory and the joy of having made us happy (1. q. 20. a. 2. *ad 2um* ).

### 4. *How is this friendship possible ? Its existence is certain:*

(a) The Scriptures tell us so. You are my friends if you do what I have commanded you (John 15. 14), that is, if you are not in sin, but in a state of grace.

(b) But is this possible, this friendship between man and God ? Between us there is an infinite gap, and how can friendship, which demands equality, be possible in such circumstances? By grace, which lifts man up to a divine level, as a sharer in the divine nature.

(c) And so that this equality may be even more perfect, God has taken our human nature and become the Son of Man. He has taken on himself all our human weaknesses.

### 5. *The demands of this friendship :*

We have to make a return for it by becoming true friends of God.



(a) By our gratitude:

Our whole lives should be one long act of thanksgiving; the Scripture tells us that the man is blessed who has found a friend (Ecclus. 25. 12). We have a true friend in God. It is right that we should thank him.

(b) Loving him as he has loved us:

The fundamental law of friendship is this mutual compénétration. God wishes us to share in his will to such an extent that we want nothing except what he wants.

(c) Talk to him as a friend:

That is how St Teresa defines prayer. Confidence and simplicity in our prayer is the sign of true friendship with God.

## I: The life of grace

1. *Grace is a life, because it is a share in the life of God:*

Therefore it will have, not merely a static, perfection value, but also a dynamic or active one as well.

2. *Grace and the virtues:*

Grace is like the nature, the virtues are like the powers by which that nature operates.

(a) The combination of grace and the virtues:

This is what we call the life of grace in man. In it grace holds the part of the vital principle while the virtues are the means or powers by which that principle operates. Grace transforms the very nature of man; the virtues transform the powers of that nature so that they can produce great and beautiful acts of virtue, worthy of the divine nature within us.

(b) By the theological virtues we are directly united to God and his activity:

i. *by faith* we unite our minds with that of God and share in his knowledge;

ii. *by charity* the Spirit pours his love into our hearts so that we can share in that divine love and love God as he loves himself;

iii. *by hope* we rest in the divine power as if it were our own, and for that reason our hope is so certain and firm; we rely on his promises that we shall one day possess him in heaven, through his help which he has also promised.

(c) Here is the picture of the supernatural life:

An anticipation of heaven, in which our life will be substantially the same—union with God. That union with God on earth is with us now, as the seed is in the earth; in heaven it will be the full harvesting of that seed.

- (a) Charity perfects faith and hope, giving them life;
- (b) it communicates to us that infinite good which we know by faith;
- (c) it unites us here below with that Good, the object of our hope;
- (d) it is the very life of God—who is love;
- (e) it cannot be separated from Grace; but faith and hope can exist without grace;
- (f) faith and hope are not necessary in heaven ; charity remains the same here and in heaven ;
- (g) it is the element in our lives which gives unity and life to all the rest; without it, even if we have every' other gift, we are as nothing (i Cor. 13. 2-3).

4. *Charity is the compendium of all the virtues:*

It gives us prudence, judgement, justice, temperance, fortitude. St Paul is right, then, when he assigns the other virtues to charity', saying that charity is patient, is kind, etc. (1 Cor. 13. 4-9).

5. *To live the life of grace:*

Grace acts through the virtues.

(a) The greater these are, so much the greater is our union with God. They increase by the use of them. They give us the possibility of producing supernatural acts, but they do not give us ease and facility—that must come through our use of them.

(b) That must be our object in life ; the frequent use of the virtues, so that all may be illumined and directed by them.

i. *The Christian must be an active person ;* it is impossible to imagine a true Christian who is lazy or in a state of spiritual paralysis ;

n. *this life demands ever increasing dedication.* It does not remove all human activity from life, but it does direct it, giving it a divine value and flavour. It relates everything to God, directs everything towards him, so that it is true to say that, for the man who does love God like this, all things work out for his good (Rom. 8.28).

iii. *It demands the moral renewal* of which the apostle speaks in the epistle of today (Eph. 4. 25-28).

J: Grace and merit

i. *The garment of grace and the heavenly banquet:*

(a) He who lacks grace cannot enter heaven ; he will be cast out into the darkness. There is a relation between grace and eternal life. Grace is its seed.

(b) But there is also another relation; grace gives a divine value to our works, with regard to eternal life. This is a new aspect of grace which deserves attention.

2. *The works done through grace:*

It is convenient to remember that grace acts through the virtues, and that it is a life.

(a) These acts are ours and God's at one and the same time, because we share in his nature by grace. They have, then, an infinite value and are worthy of an infinite reward, which is that of glory.

(b) Our acts are really worth very little; but it is grace which gives them their value and makes them worthy of heaven.

(c) The branch, united to the vine, produces its fruit, not by itself, but because of its union with the vine. We are united with our Head by charity, and that is why our good works can merit eternal life, through his power.

3. *Grades of glory in heaven:*

(a) So Christ himself said: In my Father's house there are many mansions (John 14. 2), and St Paul repeats this in another way (1 Cor. 15. 41).

(b) These different grades are related to good works, which endure after death (Apoc. 14.13). God will give the reward for them then.

(c) Works of themselves have no value; it is the love with which they are done that counts. Every evening, says John of the Cross, we should examine ourselves on this matter of love.

4. *Works without love:*

(a) Mortal sin destroys grace and charity, thereby closing the fountain of merit. Works have no value in God's sight, even though they may be worthy of human praise. Alms, sufferings, persecution, death itself, have no value without grace. They may, it is true, gain for us actual graces by which we can renew our lives and do penance, but they are not meritorious of eternal life.

(b) If anyone should fall into sin he ought to rise up immediately so as to regain God's friendship and the value of his good works. Time spent in mortal sin is time wasted, because it is useless for eternity.

5. *The merit of works done for love:*

If the soul is in the state of grace then the smallest thing it does has great value. A glass of water given for Christ's love, the saying of the name of Jesus—all things have an eternal value then.

6. *Greater grace means greater merit:*

If two people with different grades of grace do the same work, then that work will have greater or lesser value according to the grade of grace possessed by each.

(a) The more grace we have, the greater our dignity, the nearer we are to God, and thus the works we do increase in value, because the dignity of the person is communicated to his works. The same



*thing* happens among men; the general draws more pay than the simple soldier, even though the work of the latter may be harder.

(b) By his works the Christian offers *himself to God, and if he has more* grace than another then he offers more to God and merits more reward.

(c) The intrinsic value of the work increases according to the grade of grace. The field which receives more rain and manure gives the greater fruit than one which receives less, even though the same labours and care are given to them both. Thus the virtues which are planted in a soul which is watered abundantly by grace will give better fruit in the shape of good works than those which are rooted in a soul with less grace.

#### 7. *Esteem for the life of grace:*

(a) Even though it be from egoism we should do all we can to preserve the life of grace;

(b) not merely preserve but also increase it, so that our works may be more valuable; the frequenting of the sacraments is the usual method of increasing it;

(c) if we should lose it, we ought to get it back as soon as possible by confession or a perfect act of contrition.

### K: Grace and sacraments

#### I. *Jesus, the giver of grace:*

(a) On the last and greatest day of the feast Jesus stood there and cried aloud: If any man is thirsty, let him come to me, and drink (John 7. 37). It was not the first time that he invited us to drink (cf. John 4. 10).

(b) Christ is the source of all grace, because having won it for us by his Passion, his Father gave him the office of its distribution.

#### 2 *Jesus, giver of grace in the sacraments:*

(a) But where shall we find Jesus? The sick knew where to find him. And we? We also know, because apart from the normal way of prayer, we also have other ways, instituted by him. These are the sacraments, which are channels of his grace.

(b) In the sacraments we find him, because it is not Peter or Paul who baptizes, but Christ, the principal minister of all the sacraments, which are his instruments:

i. *the dead are brought to him* and receive life at his hands in baptism and penance;

ii. *children were taken to him to be blessed, and he gives them* strength in confirmation;

iii. *the hungry received food from him, and now we have his own* food, his body and blood in holy communion;

iv. *those who were just married invited him to their wedding, and* he now blesses them in the sacrament of matrimony;

V. *the priests look to heaven for their power*, and Christ confers it on them ;

vi. *the dying look to him longingly*, and he sustains and helps them with the Anointing of the Sick;

vii. *at each and every crucial moment of life* we have the sacraments at hand to help us and defend us against all attacks, and the grace they give is adapted to our own individual circumstances.

### 3. *Sacramental grace*:

The sacrament when actually given, lasts but a moment or two ; but the need is constant, temptation can attack at any moment. What efficacy will the sacrament have to combat this need ?

(a) The Lord's intention was to set up within us a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life; something which would endure. This source is sacramental grace, which is at our disposal all the time;

(b) in the sacraments which give a character, it is this which gives us the right to grace when we need it; in the others, it is given by the fact of reception of the sacrament, which directs all the grace in our souls towards certain effects.

(c) The important thing to remember is that Christ deals all the time with the individual, not with the mass. As the needs of each one are different so is the orientation of the grace they receive.

4. This is the first effect of the sacraments, to give sanctifying grace or to increase it, and to erect in us that fountain of -water, that source of grace which will give us all the help we need, adapted to our special circumstances, when we need it.

## L: Actual grace

### i. *The fall*:

(a) A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who stripped him, -wounded him and left him half dead by the roadside. Man fell from the heights of the supernatural order when he fell into the hands of the devil. He was stripped of that white garment of grace, but he -was also wounded even in his natural powers. Free will, of which he is so proud, is sorely wounded in a body given over to the sway of the senses and passion, which blind it and which turn aside the intellect, which should be its guardian.

(b) Our experience does not demonstrate to us our loss of grace, because that is outside its orbit and comes within the field of faith.

(c) But the sad fate of our free will, that we do know.

i. *Horace knew it*, when he said: I know that which is best and approve of it; but nevertheless, I follow evil ways;

ii. *St Paul knew it all too well*, while its spirit sought heavenly things the flesh was dragging him down;

iii. *we know it ourselves*, because like Horace we know and approve good, but our passions, which we are so often powerless to check, drag us down to earth.

2. *The restoration:*

Our Samaritan, Christ, took us on his shoulders. He gave us back the white garment of grace, which lifts us up once more to the divine level and enables us to attain salvation. But is that all, is that enough?

3. *Actual grace:*

(a) There is a time in the life of man when sanctifying grace is no use to him because he has not got it. This is the case of the sinner who tries to repent and make his way once more towards his salvation. He is still in sin, but he must make supernatural acts of faith, repentance, hope, etc. How is he to do this if he does not possess sanctifying grace? It is necessary for his mind to see the truth, his will should decide in favour of it, even though it is accustomed to giving way. By himself he can do nothing to attain once more the supernatural order which he has lost.

(b) But there is Christ, calling him: Behold I stand at the gate and knock. He is not converted simply because he wishes it, but because God is merciful. It is God who makes us wish and perform that which he desires. They are momentary impulses which the sinner follows. They are not permanent graces, they are given for one action at a time, that we may put aside this temptation, do this particular thing, think of our sins, etc.

(c) This is actual grace, without which man could not even begin to believe in such a way that he gets back to the supernatural order once more, just as, without the individual electric impulses the cable could not become a telegraph wire.

4. *Our salvation depends on this grace:*

But if this is true that our conversion depends on this actual grace which God dispenses as he pleases, are we not in a bad way? No, because our God is not full of caprice, but one who died for all men and wishes to save all; he told us to pray for our enemies, because he wishes all to come to the knowledge of the truth and to be saved. This is a great motive for confidence, because he who began the good work in us—and he has begun it so many times in all of us—will not rest until it be accomplished and perfected unto the day of Christ (Phil. 1.10).

5. *The need for actual grace:*

Man has confessed his sins and received God's pardon, together with sanctifying grace. Does he need fresh help? Yes, just as the telegraph wire needs the electric impulses and just as the lungs surrounded by fresh air, need the movements of the muscles<sup>o</sup>to



breathe. Thus it is natural that sanctifying grace should need actual graces in all that we do.

6. *How God inspires us:*

We may have read or heard some truth of the Gospel many times, and yet it has not moved us except on that one occasion, perhaps when it was not too well preached. Why ? Because the grace of God moved our mind and will at that moment.

7. *A reason for confidence and responsibility :*

(a) Here is a real motive for confidence in God. He is my Father, and being attentive to all my needs, he sends me his help at the opportune moment.

(b) This is also a reason for confidence when I stand before him to be judged. Lord, all my actions are yours, because you have gone before them all with your grace, helped me to do them and perfected the work in me.

(c) Here is a motive for my responsibility.

8. *The Church's prayer:*

Lord, go before all our actions with thy inspirations, and continue to help us afterwards, so that all we do may begin with thee and end in thee.

## II. THE GOSPEL

### A: Rejecting grace

i. *The Gospel scene:*

The invited guests despised the call and rejected it. The man at the feast rejected the wedding garment.

What is this rejection of grace?

(a) it means a rejection of divine omnipotence which created it and which longs to direct me ; I oppose his power and make it fail ;

(b) it is to despise his knowledge, which chose such a wonderful way to make us like God himself;

(c) it is to despise the order of his providence ; to range ourselves on the side of Satan against his established order of things;

(d) it means despising the passion and death, the purpose of which was to restore grace to us ;

(e) it implies despising the glory of God, the last end of all order in the world; in rejecting grace we rob God of his glory;

(f) it means despising the plan God has for saving us, the immediate purpose in giving us his grace;

(g) it may easily mean the rejection of the last chance which God will give us to save our souls (parable of the talents, the foolish virgins, etc.).

2. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts (Ps. 94. 8). The Church uses this psalm at the burial service !

## B: God, the inevitable

1. *The attitude of the people in the parable :*

(a) Some rejected his invitation, thinking that God had not a share in their lives and that they would be far from him if they gave themselves up to their business;

(b) the other did not worry about the fact that he had no wedding garment, because the one thing he did not expect was a visit from the king ;

(c) How sad the former must have been when they discovered that their town was in flames; how sad the fate of the latter when he found himself in the exterior darkness! It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of God.

2. *The idea of hiding from God is as old as man himself:*

(a) Adam tried it (Gen. 3. 8);

(b) Jonas did the same (1. 3);

(3) the rich man in the parable of Lazarus did not worry about the next life ;

(d) Judas tried it, by suicide.

3. *All in vain:*

(a) Adam had to come out of his hiding place;

(b) the will of God made Jonas do the task the Lord had given him;

(c) the rich man awoke in the flames of hell ;

(d) what would be the fate of Judas when he found himself face to face with the Father, whose Son he had betrayed ?

4. *Man would love to hide his thoughts, his works, his life from God:*

(a) Some would love to deny his existence ;

(b) others, at the feast, forget that he is there in spite of their passions and vices.

(c) How many times have I acted as though God could not see me or wished that he could not ?

5. *A stupid desire:*

(a) God sees me in life:

i. *even the philosophers of old knew this:* Plato says: You cannot escape from his eyes, even though you hide in the bowels of the earth or in the heights of the heavens. You will still have to suffer your punishment, either in this life or when you have gone down to Hades, in a much worse place ;

ii. *where can I go, then, to take refuge from thy spirit, to hide from thy view?* If I should climb up to heaven, thou art there; if I sink down to the world beneath, thou art present still. If I should take flight at dawn of day, and come to rest at the furthest ends

of the sea, still would I find thee beckoning to me, thy right hand upholding me (Ps. 138. 7-10);

iii. *No, the spirit of the Lord fills the whole world*", bond that holds all things in being, it takes cognisance of every sound we utter; how should ill speech go unmarked, or the scrutiny of justice pass it by? (Wis. 1. 7-8).

(b) God sees me in death :

i. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord (Apoc. 1. 8). It matters little what happens to the rivers, whether they flow from East to West, whether they are beneficent or torrential—they end in the sea in any case;

ii. he is present in all that we do and at the end he will present us with an account for which we have to answer (cf. Jeremias, 23. 20 if.).

6. *Yet not all is frightening:*

(a) There are two ways in which we can meet God at the end of our life:

i. one is that of the condemned: Depart from me . . . (cf. Os. 2. 10);

ii. but he also says of his own sheep that no one shall rob them from his hands (John 10. 28);

(b) happy indeed are they who find the Lord as a shepherd of the heavenly pastures.

7. *All will depend on how we have met him here below, on this earth:*

(a) Paul, the persecutor, met him at the gates of Damascus and in the end he was able to say: I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2. 20);

(b) those who went in to the feast found him on the roads and at the street corners ;

(c) They all found him again as the Lord of the Feast.

## C: The just God

1. *Why?*

Our human way of looking at things—which we apply to God—makes us ask this question whenever we hear a sermon on God's justice.

2. *The Book of Wisdom (chap. 12) answers us:*

The inhabitants of Canaan lived in the midst of terrible sins, but God put off his justice and only applied it slowly, even though he knew that they would not repent.



3. *lie must lay down the following principles\* based on that passage of Scripture :*

(a) There is no appeal from the justice of God, the judge of all men :

- i. he does not have to give an account to anyone and no one can question his rulings (v. 12);
- ii. he is the Lord of all and above all (w. 13-14).

(b) But God is just:

There is no need for us to be afraid that he will use his power like a tyrant:

- i. since he is just, he disposes all things according to the demands of justice since his power is the beginning of all justice (w. 15-16);
- ii. and this same sovereign power gives him the right to pardon all, if he so wishes (v. 16);
- iii. it is also the principle of all created justice.

(c) Therefore he is not merely just, but also the model for all justice;

(d) he is a kind Lord to us all (v. 18).

(e) But let no one become careless :

When this justice decides that its measure has been filled, when the patience of God is exhausted, then it puts to flight those who have refused to believe in it (w. 17-18).

4. *Conclusion:*

In this way he taught his people that the just must also be good.

## D: The key to life

I. *The key to life is in the future life:*

(a) In this life there are two passions which play a most important part, fear and hope.

(b) Both of them are salutary when they are concerned with the future life considered in the light of faith :

- i. the fear of being cast out into the darkness restrains our unruly passions ;
- ii. the hope of eternal glory makes life happier and bearable;
- iii. our life is now hope, later it will be glory, says St Augustine.

2. *The sins of youth:*

It is not surprising that youth should at times go through a crisis in the matter of faith and hope.

(a) For two reasons :

- i. the passions act on the mind, separating it from the way of truth ; especially lust and pride ;
- ii. youth lives in vain hope, creates illusions for itself which it thinks can be realized in this life.

(b) This life offers to the vain heart useless strength which satisfies for the moment the hopes and desires for happiness.

3. *Frequently the mature man corrects these faults of youth:*

(a) Disillusion, sickness, misery, both one's own and that of others, give him a realistic view of things;

(b) the passions lose something of their strength;

(c) he sees the breakdown of his earthly hopes and their uselessness;

(d) then he understands that this life is not the true one; then the virtuous man subjects his passions and turns the eyes of hope towards the future life;

(e) such a one will triumph completely, correcting his youthful criterions, proclaiming his faith—if he will only overcome the third enemy, the world. That is, if he wins the battle over human respect.

4. *At the hour of death:*

(a) It is not rare for sinners, even very great and public sinners, persecutors of the Church, to repent at the hour of death;

(b) it is not done through weakness or old age. On the contrary, they see with greater clearness the reality of things, because the mind is free from the influence of passion, both of the flesh and of pride. When they look at the empty life they have led they are humbled and repent sincerely for that.

(c) Then, turning their eyes towards the Father of mercy, they put their hope in eternal things.

5. *The great eternal truths:*

(a) We must never abandon these in preaching:

i. in retreats, in time of missions, in occasional sermons, whenever we have the chance, in fact, we should preach on hell, the judgement, death, the eternal reward, the value of hope, etc.;

ii. our Lord taught us these things time and again, as the Gospel shows us.

(b) let us use them too:

i. first of all to save, through salutary fear and hope, the souls redeemed by Christ;

ii. because without something to look forward to in the next life this one would be impossible, with all its miseries;

iii. because it is a grave mistake to tear up from the hearts of our people the thought of hell and to rob them of the hope of eternal glory.

6. *Messengers of the king:*

(a) let us go out into the streets and call them in; there are so many good people waiting for that invitation; so many sinners who need it also;

(b) we should have confidence—we will fill the banquet of the King and give much glory to Christ, our Redeemer.

E: From the thought of hell to that of love

1. *There is a great difference between fear and cowardice:*

(a) Fear is something rational and sound; cowardice is a passion. Fear is a motive for action and life; cowardice destroys all activity, makes us hide from life.

(b) That is why God preaches fear, but not cowardice. When he speaks to us of hell, the judgement, etc., his conclusions are always those which imply action and energy. Watch, he says to the disciples, after having told them about the judgement and the parable of the foolish virgins.

2. When we preach on these themes we should be careful to do the same, filling the hearts of our hearers with light and energy.

(a) In the *Spiritual Exercises* we are told to ask God for an inner feeling of the pain of the damned, so that if the love for the Lord will not allow me to overcome faults, at least the fear of hell will prevent me from falling into them.

(b) Therefore we should do two things; make ourselves realize what the damned have to suffer, and secondly, teach ourselves the lesson that these sins may drive me away from a love which will never be lacking on God's part. Thus fear will lead us to love.

3. We might put ourselves before the crucifix and think of all the millions of men who, from the beginning of the world, have separated themselves from the love of Christ and have preferred to offend him rather than love him.

(a) We must try to feel an intense sorrow at the thought of the consequences of this lack of love.

(b) We then look at ourselves and wonder that we are not already in hell after all our sins. We are not there because the love of God has known how to bide its time and wait for us.

(c) From this double thought of my own lack of love which has led me so near hell, and the love of God for me which has waited for me, will rise the new love for God which we are seeking.

4. And since love is active, I will abandon a life of sin and return to one of good works. This is the example of St Teresa, a most active life after she had seen hell in a vision. Such must my life be after this meditation.

F: The exterior darkness

Reason and faith

They go hand in hand, as two truths which cannot be opposed to one another.

I. Sometimes it is faith which backs up reason; at others it is reason which sees the conformity with faith.



2. Both show us the need for a future sanction and punishments; only our passions refuse to admit it.

### There is a punishment after this life

1. The Lord testified to this many times.

2. *Reason approves it:*

(a) God who is just and wise, also holy, would not and cannot permit himself to remain indifferent to the virtues and the vices of men. He must reward them or punish them. They often do not receive their sanction in this life; therefore in the next.

(b) Were the contrary the case then we should be obliged to say with St Paul: If the hope we have learned to repose in Christ belongs to this world only, then we are unhappy beyond all men.... Why do we, for that matter, face peril hour after hour? (1 Cor. 15. 19-3°).

### Eternal punishment

1. *The faith is perfectly clear on the point:*

The word eternal, for ever, without end, always accompanies the punishments in the next life. It even forms part of the sentence: Depart from me ... into everlasting fire (Matt. 25. 41).

2. *Reason sees no difficulty in this:*

What is more, it finds that the eternity of hell is very much in keeping with the divine attributes and the malice of sin.

(a) God is eternally good and just. Therefore he hates sin eternally. His hatred consists in persecuting it and punishing it. Therefore so long as a man is in a state of sin he must suffer for it. Only an effort on the part of God's mercy has held back the divine hand in this life. For this reason to be valid sin must keep its nature throughout all eternity, and unfortunately that is so. Sin can only be pardoned if the sinner repents, and for that he needs grace from God. God is not bound to give that grace, and he has decided that the end of life shall also end the period of the giving of grace.

(b) God's justice demands that there should be a difference between the good and the wicked. If there were no such thing as an eternity of punishment for sin then where would this difference be found? There would be no difference between the Mother of God and the worst criminal; between Michael and Satan. We can imagine the years of punishment we like, add to that number a thousand times, but if one day they will have an end, then the past will count for nothing, because we do not think of what we have been, but of what we are. There will come a time when, the past having been forgotten, the martyr and his persecutor will be in the same condition.

(c) The malice of sin, infinite in a certain sense, demands an eternal punishment.

(d) Humanly speaking we know that it should be eternal, because all that is temporal and will pass has little or no effect on us. Think of how little we dread purgatory!

(e) The mercy of God demands an eternity of punishment:

i. his justice must be as great as his mercy, since both are infinite;

ii. that mercy reached the point of offering an infinite sacrifice for us on the cross, with infinite merits at our disposal. Justice therefore should demand an infinite punishment for those who reject that mercy', infinite, not in intensity, because man's weakness could not stand that; but at least in duration;

iii. why did Christ die if it were not for the fact that God demands such a satisfaction ?

### The pain of loss

1. The sinner chose deliberately to separate himself from God and remains separated from him. There is one difference, however, that in this life he did not realize that he can only find his happiness in God, while in the next life he will long for God as Tantalus longed for water or one who is miserable desires happiness.

2. In the parable of today the man is cast forth from the king's presence; in the condemnation of the sinner the first word is Depart; on another occasion the words used are : I know you not.

3. Reason has always seen the pain of this loss; it is not just a question of not being in heaven ; it is being deprived of something to which the whole of our nature tends, it is to be frustrated, deformed in our whole beings.

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### Pain of sense

1. Man has separated himself from God in order to choose creatures, as the Jews rejected Christ after making their choice of Barabbas.

2. God has two complaints against his people as he has against the sinner; the first is met by the pain of loss; the second by that of sense, because it is just that a man should be punished according to the way he has offended. He who left God in order to join himself to a creature must also find in a creature some of his punishment.

(a) Let us never imagine that it is something childish; rather let us think of it as the accumulation of all evils without any admixture of good;

(b) something so tremendous that it has been called fire by the Scriptures ;

(c) distinct from earthly fire, but none the less terrible, because it is a fire which has been kindled by divine justice, and therefore m

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proportion to its cause. If God's love is so great, what will not his anger be against those who have rejected that love.

3. The worm of conscience—I could have saved my soul so easily!

### Conclusion

1. If both reason and faith say yes to this truth what is there that can deny it? Only my passions.

2. To which am I going to listen; to passions of a moment or to eternity which speaks to me?

### G: Hell and the preachers of love

#### A general rule

To prove the reality of hell it is a good thing to allow those to preach it who are well known for their kindness and have preached so wonderfully on charity. It is not a question of violent characters, given over to threats, but of those whose favourite theme was love. Yet these same, when they treat of hell, explain the doctrine in all its crudeness; there is no attempt to water it down, nor are they guided by violence, hate or other passions.

#### An example

We shall leave aside the saints, even those who are well known for their gentleness, and take as our examples St John, St Paul and Christ himself.

##### i. *St John the Evangelist:*

(a) He is the very preacher of love, as if his close contact with Christ, the fact that he laid his head on his Master's breast at the Last Supper, had communicated to him something of the loving heart of Christ. Yet, when he speaks to us about hell, his words are terrible in the extreme.

(b) We find the doctrine in the Apocalypse, when he describes the kingdom of the Beast, the enemy of Christ.

(c) He begins by talking about the kingdom of Christ, in which those who have served the Lamb will have their share. I shall be his God, and he shall be my son. Then he goes on: But not the cowards, not those who refuse belief, not those whose lives are abominable; not the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, not those who are false in any of their dealings. Their lot awaits them in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and it is the second death (Apoc. 21. 8).

(d) Whosoever worships the Beast and his image, or wears the beast's mark on his forehead or hand, he too shall drink; but the



wine he shall drink is God's anger, untempered wine poured out in the cup of his vengeance. Fire and brimstone shall be his torment. The smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; day and night no rest is theirs . . . (*ibid.* 14. 9-11).

(e) The apostle of love could not paint in too terrible language the fate of those who despair and hate God . . . and in the great heat that burned them, men blasphemed the name of God . . . instead of repenting and giving praise to him . . . all the beast's kingdom was turned into darkness, in which men sat biting their tongues for pain, finding cause to blaspheme the God of heaven in their pains and their ulcers, instead of finding cause for repentance in their ill deeds (*ibid.* 16. 9-11).

2. *St Paul:*

(a) No one better than St Paul in the praise of love, no one who put so much emphasis on the love of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me. Yet he also speaks of terrible vengeance and punishments, when he talks about hell.

(b) For him the first thing about hell is the exclusion from the kingdom; then the punishments (1 Cor. 6. 9 if.; 15. 50; Gal. 5. 21).

(c) Or do you doubt that there is justice with God, to pay with affliction those who afflict you. . . . But that is for the day when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven, with angels to proclaim his power; with fire flaming about him, as he pours out vengeance on those who do not acknowledge God, on those who refuse obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The presence of the Lord, and the majesty of his power, will condemn them to eternal punishment (2 Thess. i. 7-9. Cf. Rom. 1. 18 ff.; 2. 9-11).

3. *Christ Jesus—the heart which so loved men:*

(a) Will his be less hard a doctrine ?

i. He talks of a worm which does not die—continuous remorse of conscience; of a fire which is never extinguished (Mark. 9. 43), of a fire which will season like salt (*ibid.* 49);

ii. a place in which there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 8.12; 13. 42; 22.13; 24. 51; 25. 30);

iii. place to which they go who are cursed by God (Matt. 25. 41);

iv. a place in which the last farthing of the debt has to be paid;

v. a place in which there is no mercy (Luke 16. 19-31).

(b) Therefore he deduces these consequences :

i. And there is no need to fear those who kill the body, but have no means of killing the soul; fear him more, who has the power to ruin body and soul in hell (Matt. 10. 28).

ii. If thy right eye is the occasion of thy falling into sin, pluck it out... better to lose one part of thy body than to have the whole cast into hell (Matt. 5. 29).

### Conclusion

If these preachers of love speak thus to us of this terrible punishment, then it must be certain. But they have also given us the solution ; to take refuge in Christ and in the love which they also preached, so that we may form part of the kingdom of God.

*Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost*

## THE HEALING OF THE RULER'S SON

### SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Ephesians 5. 15-21

Gospel: John 4. 46-53

#### Texts concerning the education of children

##### I. *The duties of children towards their parents:*

###### (a) The law of Moses:

Honour thy father and thy mother; so thou shalt live long to enjoy the land which the Lord thy God means to give thee. Ex. 20. 12. Cf. Deut. 5.16.

Death is the penalty for one who kills his father or his mother... death is the penalty for one who curses father or mother. Ex. 21. 15, 17.

Worshippers of such a God, you must reverence father and mother. Lev. 19. 3.

Cursed be the man who refuses to honour father and mother, Amen. Deut. 27.16.

###### (b) The sapiential books:

When God takes my soul to himself, give this body of mine burial, and be the support of thy mother while her life lasts. Tob. 4.3.

Heed well, my son, thy father's warnings, nor make light of thy mother's teaching; no richer heirloom, crown or necklace can be thine. Prov. 1.8-9. Cf. *ibid.* 4.1 ; 6.20.

A father's smile, a mother's tears, tell of a son well schooled or ill. *Ibid.* 10. 1.

By his father's teaching a son grows wise; only the headstrong will not listen to a warning. *Ibid.* 13. 1.

Shame on the wretch that brings ruin on his own father, drives his own mother out of doors. *Ibid.* 19. 26.

Shall he who robs father or mother make light of it? He is next door to a murderer. *Ibid.* 28.24. Cf. 30.17; Eccclus. 8.11 ; 22. 3.

###### (c) The Gospels:

Apart from repeating and confirming the Old Law teaching, we can notice:

He is not worthy of me that loves father or mother more ; he is not worthy of me, that loves son or daughter more. Matt. 10. 37



And every man that has forsaken home or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive his reward a hundredfold, and obtain everlasting life. Matt. 19. 29. Cf. Luke 14. 26.

(d) St Paul:

You who are children must show obedience in the Lord to your parents; it is your duty; Honour thy father and thy mother—that is the first commandment which has a promise attached to it, So it shall go well with thee, and thou shalt live long to enjoy the land. You who are fathers, do not rouse your children to resentment; the training, the discipline in which you bring them up must come from the Lord. Eph. 6. 1-4. Cf. Col. 3. 20-21.

2. *The duty of parents to educate their children:*

(a) In religion:

And thou shalt tell thy children in those after times all the Lord did for thee when thou madest thy escape from Egypt.... When in after times thy sons ask thee what is the meaning of this, thou shalt tell them how the Lord's constraining power rescued you from your prison-house in Egypt. Ex. 13. 8. 14.

(b) In the commandments of God:

It is a story often heard, well known among us; have not our fathers told it to us, a thing not to be kept back from their children, from the generation which follows? Their talk was of God's praise, of his power often made known, of the wonderful deeds he did. He made a covenant with Jacob, gave Israel his law, commanding our fathers to make it known to their children, so that a new generation might learn it; sons would be born to them to take their place, and hand it on to their own sons after them. Ps. 77. 3-6.

It is living men, as I am a living man today, that give thee thanks, pass on from father to son the story of thy faithfulness. Iasias 38. 19. Cf. Joel 1.3.

(c) Correction where necessary:

Spare the rod, and thou art no friend to thy son; ever a kind father is quick to punish. Prov. 13. 24.

There is a proverb; train a boy in the way that is best for him, and when he is old he will not leave it (Hebrew text transi.) Prov. 3.

Boyhood's mind is loaded with a pack of folly, that needs the rod of correction to shift it. *Ibid.* 15.

Nor ever from child of thine withhold chastisement; he will not die under the rod; rather, the rod thou wieldest shall baulk the grave of its prey. Prov. 23. 13-14.

Wisdom comes of a reproof, comes of the rod; leave a child to go its own way and a mother's care is wasted. Prov. 29. 15.

Thou hast sons; train them to hear the yoke from their youth up. Thou hast daughters; keep them chaste and do not spoil them with thy smile. Ecclus. 7. 25-26.

Better one son who fears God than a thousand who grow up rebellious; better die childless than have rebels to succeed thee. Ecclus. 16. 3-4.

Inure thy son to the rod, as thou lovest him; so shalt thou have comfort of him in thy later years. . . . Discipline thy son, and thou shalt take pride in him; he shall be thy boast among thy familiars. Discipline thy son if thou wouldst make thy ill-wishers envy thee, wouldst hold thy head high among thy friends. *Ibid.* 30.

SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

I. LITURGICAL

Lirurgists are not of one mind in explaining the formulas which accompany the Epistle and Gospel of this Sunday.

Dom Guéranger, following the old line, sees in the antiphonal parts of the Mass a reference to the previous Sunday, with its Gospel of the exclusion of the Jews from the Kingdom. Before the end of the world they will be called again and will enter into the banquet. Therefore the Church prays for them in today's Mass, with a hymn of praise which is at one and the same time a prayer and a cry of triumph. We see this in the Introit and the Offertory. The Gradual and the Communion represent the Church, faithful to God, asking for even more spiritual blessings.

Schuster and Parsch, together with most modems, see in all the Mass of today a prayer of Christians, living in exile in this w'orld and sending out their prayers of hope, just as did the Jews in time of the captivity in Babylon.

One of the riches of the liturgy consists in the fact that it makes use of the whole of Scripture, making it come alive for us and breed in our hearts similar sentiments to the ones it aroused in the hearts of those who first heard it. Similarly, preaching of the homily gains very much once it is done in a liturgical framework. Thus there will also be greater love and appreciation for the liturgy itself.

On this Sunday we see, in the Gospel, the sickness of the boy, the faith and hope of the father; the remedy and health in Christ. Humanity, too, is sick. Therefore the Introit and the Offertory speak of the groans of men who are aware of their sins and see themselves punished for them. But they go to Christ, as did this ruler, and ask for mercy (the Introit), forgiveness (Collect), and also beg that they may be given the Eucharistic food, figured in the words of the

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

Gradual, which is the one used for the feast of Corpus Christi. The niler believed, and with him his whole house. Likewise we believe his word, which is the source of our hope and the motive for our consolation here below (Communion).

But there is another relation which can be built up between the texts. The Gospel speaks to us of faith, and it is clear that there are different grades of this virtue as the apostle warns us. We must walk cautiously, as wise men do, hoarding our opportunities . . . (Eph. 5. 15-16), avoiding drunkenness, full of the spirit of love, making our works a hymn of praise to God *{ibid}*. For this it is necessary:

- i. to root out our vices (Secret);
- ii. obey the divine commands (Postcommunion);
- iii. live in the Eucharist (Gradual).

There is a certain air of sadness in the liturgy of today's Mass; a sense of fallen nature. But there is also an element of joy when we behold Christ and think of the fact that, through our faith in him, we can attain his mercy, pardon and peace, living always in his law, hoping for the heavenly joys.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Ephesians 5. 15-21

This piece forms part of chapter five, in which St Paul draws moral conclusions from certain principles laid down previously. We mentioned this last Sunday. In this case the principle is our divine sonship. When you were sons of darkness you did the works of darkness (cf. first Sunday of Advent); but now that you are sons of the light you should walk according to the light, imitators of God as his most dear sons.

Having laid down this principle, Paul, without trying to follow any really logical order, examines some of the works of darkness and those of the light; and it is from this exposition that the Church chooses this piece for the epistle today.

#### i. *Texts:*

*{2}* See how carefully you have to tread ... as wise men do:

He who is a son of the light, of Christ, of God, must study carefully the kind of life he must lead in accordance with that new nature. It is a fool's action to have received a nature which is divine and full of light and to live the life of the old man and of darkness. It is a very foolish thing to have a faith and not to live according to it.

If we wished to penetrate St Paul's mind a little more and see what he means by this wisdom we would find sufficient data in this epistle.

In i. 8. we are told that the grace of God has given us both



## TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

wisdom and prudence; the former is the science of first principles, the latter that of the practical application of them. But to St Paul, the principle which rules all the others is a simple one. God has decided to recapitulate all things in Christ, in whom we have been called (w. 9-12). Therefore those who have been illuminated by this spirit and revelation should live like those who know' that their model is Christ; that their hope is in heaven; that they can attain all things by his grace working in us, and his power within us; and that, if God raised Christ, that resurrection will also take place in his mystical Body.

We may well meditate on the abundance of doctrine contained in one word, that of living like wise men. The interpretation we have given is in full accord with 5. 17. You must grasp what the Lord's will is for you. The wise man knows what is the first principle of our divine life, the will of God for us, which should govern all we do; and the summary of that will is Christ, our model.

(b) hoarding the opportunity that is given you, in evil times like these:

What opportunity is this? First of all, that which the true Christian spirit learns to seek, even in evil times; but most of all St Paul is thinking of the messianic era and of the whole of life—which is an opportunity for doing good to all men (Gal. 6. 10). The time for merit is as short as life; which is very short if we compare it to eternity. To know God's will at every moment is to make the most of the time at our disposal.

The days are always evil, because we live in the midst of temptations, persecutions, until eternity comes for us.

(c) Do not besot yourselves with wine; that leads to ruin:

St Paul is quoting Proverbs 23. 31, from the LXX version. There is little in the New Testament about drunkenness. St Paul, however, writing to the Gentile converts from nations in which it was frequent, mentions it often. At times in general terms of condemnation (Rom. 13.13; i Cor. 6.10; Gal. 5. 21; 1 Thess. 5. 7). At other times it is to rebuke certain Christian excesses in the *agape* (1 Cor. 11. 21); and at others to give advice to bishops, priests and deacons (1 Tim. 3. 2-8; Tit. 2. 2-3).

(d) Your tongues unloosed in psalms and hymns and spiritual music, as you sing and give praise to the Lord in your hearts :

This undoubtedly refers to the reunions of the Christians, full of the sense of the Spirit, of which we are given a vivid description in Acts 4. 24-31. In the Epistle to the Colossians there is a similar passage (3. 16) which also refers to those reunions, of which the younger Pliny said that the one crime of the Christians, if it were a

crime at all, is that they were accustomed to meet together on the appointed days to sing hymns together to Christ as if he were God (Ep. 96). This is the greatest praise that could be given to liturgical prayer. We might underline the phrase *in your hearts*, as being the most important element in liturgical worship, as opposed to mere ceremonial.

(e) Give thanks continually to God . . .

The Christian always has motives for giving thanks to God. St Thomas comments on this verse. The more we draw near to God, he says, the better we know him and the less we esteem ourselves in comparison with him. . . . That is why St Paul says *continually*, that is, for all his gifts, those which appear good to us and those which appear bad. But all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom they come to us.

(f) as you stand in awe of Christ, submit to each other's rights:

One of the typical Pauline phrases, passing from one idea to another in such a way that we never know if we are to relate it to what has gone before or to what comes afterwards. It would appear that he is talking about the due submission to a hierarchy of authority which the true Christian must admit and practise.

In any case, there are several thoughts contained in this passage. One is that of the submission one to another which should be in the mind of the Christian; submission in this case meaning service. The idea of domination is not Christian, because we are the disciples of one who did not come to be ministered to, but to minister (Matt. 20. 28).

St Jerome, with his customary strength of phrase, quotes other passages of St Paul, in the first of which he shows the saint's true glory: What title have I, then, to a reward? Why, that when I preach the gospel I should preach the gospel free of charge, not making full use of the rights which gospel preaching gives me. Thus nobody has any claim on me, and yet I have made myself everybody's slave, to win more souls (1 Cor. 9. 18-19).

A rule for all Christians: Yes, brethren, freedom claimed you when you were called. Only, do not let this freedom give a foothold to corrupt nature; you must be servants still, serving one another in a spirit of charity (Gal. 5. 13).

The reason for this service is that we must have that mind which is in Christ Jesus, who took the form of a slave (Phil. 2. 7), and gave us the example of this in the washing of the feet.

St Jerome crowns his exposition by directing himself to the leaders of the Church: Let all hear, bishops and priests, let the doctors note it well, and let all know that they must be subject to their subjects.... The difference between the princes of the Gentiles

and those of the Christians is that they dominate their subjects while we serve ours, and that the lesser we are among them, the greater we are (PL. 26, 563).

## B: The Gospel: John 4. 46-53

### 1. *Situation in history:*

We are at a moment in the history of Christ when he is about to begin to preach and work in Galilee. It is true that he had already worked the miracle at Cana, but that was out of due time, as if he had deliberately set out to prove the intercession of his Mother.

The public life can be divided into three parts; his first manifestation in Jerusalem; his preaching in Galilee; his final preaching in Judea and his death.

This scene opens the second era. After his miracles in Jerusalem which had led some to believe, although our Lord did not rely on them too much or trust them (John 2. 23-24), and after converting the Samaritan city of Sichar, Christ arrives in Galilee, and precisely at Cana, where he had already worked the miracle of the wine. The state of mind of the people in this province was by no means as sincere as that of the Samaritans, but nor was it as black as that of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They wait anxiously for the Lord in the hope that he will repeat among them what he has already done in the city' (John 4. 45). It is more curiosity and a false messianic ideal rather than true humility. That is why the fruit of the mission is rather discouraging and the Lord himself sums it up in his reproaches against the cities which were to know him so well (Matt. 23. 22-24). However, the mission was not sterile, because the majority of his followers were to come from Galilee, to the extent that the mere possession of the local accent would make one of them suspect (Matt. 26. 73).

We have dwelt on this factor because of its importance. Jews, Samaritans and inhabitants of Galilee all heard and saw our Lord, but the greater fruit seems to have come from those who saw least of him. Why is this? Obviously, because of the dispositions of his hearers. Miracles and graces were poured out in abundance on Jerusalem, but only managed to make enemies, because pride raised a big obstacle. In Galilee, among a more simple people, there were greater results, but not in comparison -with the time spent among them. Laziness, bad example, the doctrine of their leaders, refusal to give up their own judgement or to bow down before divine truth, all these raised insuperable barriers. Christ himself condemns Capharnaum for its pride (Matt. 11. 23).

We can see in this passage St John's idea of completing the Synoptics, who omit the preaching in Jerusalem and the two miracles in Galilee, to begin their gospels with the preaching in that area.



## GENERAL COMMENTS

### 2. *Argument:*

John describes place and people for us; then he gives us the two acts of the drama, the petition and the result of it.

### 3. *Texts:*

#### (a) a nobleman . . .

The word indicates a courtier of Herod, whether of the military or civil branch of his household we do not know. There were other servants of Herod who were among the first converts, as we know from another source (Luke 8. 3; Acts 13. 1). In any case, he was an important person in the region, and just as there is no social distinction when it comes to illness, so in the mercy of the Lord there is none.

#### (b) hearing that Jesus had come . . .

Which shows us how quickly his fame had spread after his very short period in the Holy City; the news of his coming had even reached the noblemen in Capharnaum.

#### (c) asked him to come down and heal his son . . .

His misery forces him to be humble! How different we are when fortune smiles on us! However, in this man's case his humility led to his conversion.

#### (d) You must see signs and wonders . . .

We shall say something later about this man's faith; at the moment we must attend to the quiet reproof administered by Christ to him and to the others who were present. It is not that miracles are unnecessary, but that there is no need to demand their repetition. Christ's idea is to teach them humility and fervour. For the same reason he puts off a cure at times to increase faith and prayer.

#### (e) Come down, before my child dies:

Why insist on his lack of faith, especially, when we shall find signs of the same thing later in the friends of Lazarus? Rather we may dwell on his persevering prayer.

#### (f) and he and all his household found faith:

Having checked the time the man realized that it was at the very moment when Jesus told him that his son would be well that the miracle had happened. He believed, and with him his whole household. We see here too the influence a good parent or master can have on his house. He should be a king in government, a master in teaching and a priest in prayer. If he has these three conditions it will be easy for him to lead his whole household to the faith.

### 4. *Grades which lead to faith:*

Faith is an assent of the intellect commanded by the will. This is its process:

(a) reason demonstrates that there are sufficient motives for belief, that is for accepting as true something which has been revealed by God, while it affirms at the same time that God is to be believed if he should speak to man ;

(b) the will demands that the intellect should submit and believe in the word of God who has revealed this truth ;

(c) the intellect believes.

In the course of this process the will can present its demands with more or less energy and decision. Against the reasons proposed by the intellect in the first stage it can oppose its laziness, passions, etc.; and accordingly a weak demand. But as the will, aided by grace, increases the strength of its demands that the intellect should submit, so the intellect will believe more firmly.

We see this in the case of the man in the gospel story. He begins by belief in Christ as a miracle worker, otherwise he would never have left his sick child to ride over twenty miles to see Christ. But his faith is not robust, because he wants our Lord to come down to his house ; he thinks that is necessary and insists on it. However, his faith increases, and he obeys when our Lord tells him to go home, that his child will be well. Once he has confirmed the fact, then it is said that he believes—that is, his faith is now what it should be.

What did he do to reach this grade of faith ? Be humble, pray, have confidence and obey the Lord.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(Various extracts from his works concerning the obligation of all Christians to care for the good of the neighbour, an obligation which should be felt more by priests and fathers of families.)

#### 1. *The obligation of priests to look after the neighbour:*

(a) They must work for the salvation of the rest of men ...

Basil questions him. Do you think that you will be saved if you do not work for the salvation of others ?

Chrysostom replies: You are right; no one can believe that he will attain his salvation unless he works for others. Not only was there no profit in the talent for that ungrateful servant who hid it, but he lost it for not increasing it and making use of it. However, it seems to me that my punishment will be greater if I am accused of not having worked for others, than it would be if I were accused of having lost my own soul.

(b) even though it be the salvation of one soul merely:

I am like a sower who casts his seed on stone, thorns, or good ground, but it is impossible that, taking into consideration the quantity of seed which I sow, there should not be a half, a third, a tenth or at least one who receives it with fruit. It is no small thing to save one sheep, when the shepherd of the gospel left the ninety-nine for one which had been lost. Never despise even one man, because he is a man and most dear to God. Even though he be a slave he does not appear to me unworthy, because I do not look for dignity, but for virtue, not the gift of command or slavery, but the soul. And even though it be but one, he is a man, and for him the heavens have been spread wide, the sun shines, the moon runs its course, the air surrounds him, the fountains spring up, the sea stretches forth in grandeur, the prophets are sent and the law is given. But why continue? For him the Son of God became man, died for him, shed his blood for him. Shall I despise him then? Shall I have so little courage that I will allow him to be lost? For one woman, a Samaritan and adulteress, Christ spared no effort. I shall never be silent, even though no one hears me. I am a doctor and I shall prescribe; a teacher and my obligation is to teach, since God has given me that office. No one mends his ways? What does that matter? I shall receive my reward, even though it is possible that, among so many hearers, there will not be one who takes advantage of what I say.

## 2. *Fathers of families:*

(Book 3 of the work entitled *Against those Enemies of the Monastic Life* contains several things which might have been written for us today. In it Chrysostom explains the doctrine of the education of children by their parents.)

(a) *Obligation of looking after the salvation of the neighbour:*

The just Judge will demand an account of how we have worked for the salvation of our neighbour, as for that of our own soul. . . . Let no one say: What does it matter to me what happens or what obligation have I to look for the salvation of others? He who is condemned, let him be condemned; and he who is saved, let him be saved. It does not matter to me, nor have I to look to the salvation of anyone except myself. So that no one may say this God made sure that he would root this thought out of our minds, by multiplying the laws which oblige us to give up our own comfort and take heed for our neighbour. Thus the apostle imposes on the Romans the obligation of acting like fathers towards the weak . . . and in yet another place he warns them that those who are negligent about the salvation of others sin against Christ himself and tear down the edifice built by God (1 Cor. 8. 12). He states that he does not teach



this of himself, but as a result of what he has learned from the Master.

Even though we may order our own lives on the way of sanctity it is of no use to us if this sin of carelessness can cast us down to hell. If there is no excuse which will avail those who refuse to help their neighbour in his temporal needs, how shall he not suffer incomparable evils who pays no heed to this obligation, so much the greater since the care of souls is of more importance?

God did not make man only for himself, but also for others. For this reason Paul calls the faithful *beacons*, meaning that they must light the way for all, since he who merely lights the way for himself can hardly be called a beacon. In yet another place he says that the man who has no care for his servants is worse than an infidel; and I do not think that the word *provision* used in that context means simply temporal care, but the care of the soul; and if anyone should say that it refers merely to the body then I would argue that the sin of carelessness about the soul is obviously more grave.

#### (b) The fathers of families and their obligations:

He uses the example of the priest Heli, who was punished so severely by God because he did not educate his sons in the right way (i Kings 4. 18). Let no one say: Am I perchance the Lord of another's will? I shall ask pardon for my sins, but my children are of age, let them take their own punishment. . . . The obligation of educating our children is written in our very nature, which inclines us most strongly to it; it is of divine law, which even descends to such minor details as saying that they must have explained to them the meaning of the principal feasts (Ex. 13. 8). The same law demands that children should love their parents and punishes them severely if they do not obey their parents; which is only another way of stressing the obligation the latter have of educating their children.

Let us learn that God will not withstand patiently our carelessness towards those whom he loves so much. . . . *He will not leave things* like that, but will become indignant and full of righteous anger, as he has shown on so many occasions. For that reason St Paul (Eph. 6. 4) commanded that they should be brought up in *discipline* and the teaching of the Lord. If we (priests) are commanded to care for their souls as if we had to render an account of them, much greater is the obligation of a father who gave birth to them, educated them and lives with them. He can find no excuse for his own sins and none either for those of his sons.

#### (c) The need of education:

If vice was natural to man then it might be possible to find some excuse, but no matter who we are who voluntarily twist our nature, what excuse can we offer if we permit one to become evil whom we

love above all other things ? That we have not wished to avoid it ? That will never be put forward by anyone who is a father, because nature herself inclines him to the contrary. That he has not been able to avoid it ? Let him not say that, he who received that child so young, who had him under his dominion and care, always in his house, so as to be able to govern him easily and without effort.

If children are perverted it is because parents have wrong ideas about the conditions of the present life. They think of nothing but the things of this world and are careless about their own souls and those of their children. I have already called those parents—and let no one think that I did it from anger—more criminal than those who kill their children, because the latter merely separate soul from body, while the former cast both soul and body into hell fire.... The day of the resurrection the effects of bodily death will vanish, but there is no one who can remedy the death of the soul.

(d) Another motive:

Would that it were merely a question of not instructing his children. But there you see him teaching them the vanities of this world, indoctrinating them with those two most powerful loves, that of avarice and that of vainglory, the quickest road to condemnation, since money will arouse in them all kinds of inordinate desires. ... How can we hope that he will be saved whom you have set on the road of riches, which leads necessarily to pleasure ? Poor youths ! Who will save them ? Their parents ? The teachings and examples they give them are against that salvation. Themselves ? Youth is not sufficient of itself to teach itself virtue, and even if there were one courageous one who of himself felt inclined to virtue, even before the seed could germinate, the continual hearing of his parents' conversations would choke it. Just as the body, without healthy food, cannot grow, so the soul, continually hearing conversations like these, cannot think of doing great things. . . .

There will be some who tell me that they do not teach their children these things ; but really they do, in works, not in words.... Not only do you teach your children precepts contrary to those of the Lord, but also, under elegant names, you hide sins ; you call assistance at the games and the theatre education ; you speak of riches as if they gave freedom ; you call love of glory magnanimity, prodigality you call by the name of generosity ; you speak of injustice in terms of fortitude. As if that were not enough, you give virtues the name of vices. You call temperance rusticity ; modesty, timidity ; justice to you is weakness ; suffering injuries, that is cowardice.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(Here we shall group together some of the things he says about faith, especially those which tend to illustrate the passage in today's



Gospel and the reproach of our Lord against those who had to see miracles before they would believe.)

### Faith

*Offaith in that which is not seen:*

Many think that the Christian religion is worthy of contempt rather than of praise, because it presents to us things which we cannot see. In order to refute those who think they are very wise because they refuse to believe that which they do not see, we shall try to show them that it is necessary to believe many things in that way, even though we cannot show them the divine truths in which we believe.

(a) **Without faith there would be complete confusion in human society:**

Truly, unless you did believe you would not expose yourself to danger to prove your friendship; and when you do that, then it is a proof that you believe before putting it to the proof. If we should not believe that which we do not see, how can we possibly believe in the fidelity of our friends? And even when we do prove it, in time of adversity, it is still more a matter for belief than for proof.... We must believe because we do not see.

Who is not aware *of* the great confusion that would come upon human society unless faith existed? Since love is invisible, how would men be able to love if no one believes that which is not seen? Friendship would disappear, because it is founded on mutual love. And once friendship disappears, then the soul could not keep intact the bonds of marriage, of affinity or relationship, because in these too there is something of friendship. Thus, neither husband nor wife would love each other, if they do not believe in mutual love, because it cannot be seen. Nor would they long to have children, since they do not believe that they must have them together. If children are born to them and grow up, they will not love their parents; for since love is invisible, they will not see how their parents' hearts burn for them, if belief in what is not seen is temerity and not a faith worthy of all praise....

(b) **The need for faith:**

The beginning of a holy life, worthy of eternal reward, is faith, which is a belief in that which as yet you do not see, so as to be able to merit the sight of that which now you believe. . . . Once the human race separated itself from God, lying prostrate and sunk in misery through its own sins, it found itself in the same situation with regard to sanctification as it was with regard to creation. Without the latter it would not have existed; without the redemption it would not have been sanctified. God's justice found it necessary to punish



man's rebellion; but there is also in God a mercy which is as infinite as his justice and which allow'ed him to decide in our favour....

Nor can we glory in our faith as if we could do anything of ourselves. Faith is not merely a gift, but also a great mercy, and if you have it, then it is because you have received it. What have you that you have not received ? . . . (i Cor. 4. 7).... I cannot describe to you the great benefit which is our faith, because human language fails. But what mere words cannot describe each Christian can do for himself in the secret of his heart. If we meditate on this great gift, which is faith, as by law we must, then how much we should prefer it to all other gifts we have received from God ? If we are bound to be grateful for lesser gifts, with how much more reason should we not be grateful for this one, which is superior to all the rest!

(c) We are justified by faith:

The apostles, the chief shepherds of the flock, not merely saw with their own eyes that which they preached, but also touched it with their hands. Yet our Lord, reserving for us the gift of faith, after one of his disciples had touched him, and had thus convinced himself that it was the Lord, saying: My Lord and my God : replies, Because you have seen me you have believed. And then, looking at those who would come into being later, he says: Blessed are they who have not seen but have believed. We have not seen, but we have heard and we have believed. We have nothing, yet are we called blessed ! The Lord came in visible flesh to the Jews and they killed him ; he did not come to us in that visible form, but we have received him.... Have we no justice then ? Undoubtedly we have. Let us be grateful for that which we possess, so that what we lack may be added unto us, and let us not lose that which has been given to us. We have been justified, but our justification increases when we make good use of the good we have received.

(d) The faith which justifies is distinguished from that of the devils by hope and charity:

Man begins by faith. But what is the object of faith? Belief. However, it is necessary to distinguish this faith from that of the devils. The function of faith is to believe; yet the Apostle James tells us that the devils also believe and tremble. If you have nothing but faith, and have not hope and charity, I will say to you what James says: The devils also believe and tremble. What merit is it of yours if you say that Christ is the Son of God ? This is what Peter said, and was told: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona. The devils said it also, and were told to be silent. Peter is said to be blessed because flesh and blood had not revealed that to him, but the Father; the devils on the other hand are told to keep quiet, although they say the same as Peter. The Lord looks at the root, not only at the flower. . . . You must distinguish your faith, then, from that of the

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devils. How will you distinguish it? The devils replied with fear. Peter answered with love. Add hope, then, to your faith. And what is the condition necessary for hope? Purity of conscience. Add charity to hope. We have a most excellent road to follow, according to the testimony of the apostle: I can shew you a way which is better than any other (1 Cor. 12. 31). I may speak with every tongue that men and angels use; yet if I lack charity, I am no better than echoing bronze or the clash of cymbals (*ibid.* 13. 1).

(e) Both true faith and a holy life come from God:

Who gave this love to Peter? Who gave him this love that by love he could say, Thou art the Master, the Son of the living God? Did it come from him, this love? No, because the same chapter of the Gospels shows us what Peter had from God and what he had from himself. You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The Lord answered him: And blessed art thou, Simon, Bar-Jona. Why? Have you done anything of your own to merit such praise? No, you are blessed because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. . . . Shortly after these words which contain great praise for the faith of Peter, and when he is called symbolically a stone, Christ began to make it known to his disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem, and . . . must be put to death, and rise again on the third day. Then it was that Peter shewed what he had of himself; he grew afraid, horrified at the thought of the death of Christ. The sick man trembled at the sight of the medicine. Never, O Lord, no such thing shall befall thee. Have mercy on yourself and do not let them treat you in this way. And where have you left those words: I have power to lay down my life and power to take it up again? (John 10. 18). Have you forgotten these words, Peter? And those others? Greater love than this no man hath.... I see that you have also forgotten these words of your Master. That was what Peter had of his own; fear, terror, horror of death; all that was Peter's, or perhaps it would be better to say Simon's, not Peter's. And Christ says to him: Get thou behind me, Satan. Blessed art thou, Simon. That is the work of God. Get thee behind me, Satan; that is the work of Peter. . . .

Hope in the Lord and join to your faith the doing of good works. Confess Christ made man; believe that both faith and the power of your good works come from him and hope that he will increase and perfect them within you.

## III. ST BERNARD

### The weakness of our faith

(The summary is: our faith is weak because, in spite of the fact that we believe in the next life, we live as if we did not believe in it.

We do not admit fully the promises of sweetness and gentleness which God has promised in this life to those who follow him. Otherwise how can we explain the fact that we do not follow' the road of perfection? PL. 183, 736-739.)

1. *The small influence of our faith in the eternal life:*

Let no one, even though he be a Christian in name only, doubt that the eternal happiness of heaven for which we yearn while we are still on this earthly pilgrimage, and also the eternal punishments of hell which God has prepared for the wicked, defy human understanding. We can neither take in with our earthly minds the grandeur of heaven nor the terrible nature of the punishments of hell. But would that we all lived in accordance with our faith . . . that on the one hand the thought of the eternal bliss which awaits us might lessen our evil desires and the fear of the eternal flames might fill us with salutary fear. . . .

Why do we not try, with all our might, even though it may mean offering our bared breast to the sharp swords, or pass through fire and water; why do we not, I repeat, try to avoid that terrible misery or quicken our pace towards that eternal happiness, except it be for the fact that our faith has become, as it were insensible and almost dead? And to increase our misfortune, to all the obstacles to salvation which cross our path, to all those occasions of sin and dangers which hem us in on all sides, we must add another misfortune, by no means a small one, and that is the esteem we have for that double fate which awaits us does not go hand in hand with our judgements. When we examine the two roads which lead to that twofold end, we do not attend or conform ourselves to the judgement of what is eternal life. It is not to be wondered at, then, that our heart does not feel moved towards virtue with the delights which accompany it, when the very thought of eternal happiness leaves it cold and lazy. It is not surprising that we are not frightened by the bitterness caused in the soul by sins, when we are not even horrified by those eternal punishments prepared for the devil and his angels. This can only be explained by the fact that we allow ourselves to be led away by the things which surround us, even though very inferior to the others; therefore we only wish for the pleasant things, fleeing from those which are difficult or annoying to us.

2. *Little faith in the eternal promises, given for the present life:*

But I am even more surprised how our faith shows itself so weak with regard to present things, when it appears that we have a firm faith in the future ones. . . . Is it not Christ himself who tells us that he has a kingdom prepared for his elect and the fire for the wicked? Is it not he who, with those same lips, tells us that those who do not come to him will be burdened with labours and works, while those



who do come to him he will console and support, so that they do not weaken? He who offers us an eternal kingdom also tells us that his yoke is sweet and his burden light. He who promises us eternal happiness in our fatherland also tells us that we shall find rest and sweetness in the keeping of his law during our time of exile. Finally, his apostle speaks: Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love him. All believe that without difficulty. Then the Lord himself speaks and tells us: Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened; I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon yourselves, and learn from me; I am gentle and humble of heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11. 28-30). In spite of such deliberate words, how many shut their their ears to them—at least the ears of their hearts, since they do not dare to close those of the body to them! What kind of disbelief is this? Better to say, is there a greater folly? As if Eternal Wisdom and Truth could deceive us! As if infinite Love did not wish to grant us what it offers, or as if infinite omnipotence could not do it!

Who is there so given up to pleasures and lust that he would not rather prefer sobriety and chastity if only he knew that in them he would find other pleasures, more refined and delightful? Who is so ambitious that he would not begin to be content with his lot, or even one more vile and abject, if he understood completely—and so it is—that charity, which does not seek comfort or gifts, is infinitely more lovable than all dainties? Who is so avaricious that he would not despise all riches if he only knew that there was more pleasure in poverty? Yet in vain does Christ proclaim, in all tones of voice, that his yoke is sweet; in vain does he try to persuade us that the burden of his law is an easy one, since even those who rejoice in the name of Christians, disciples of Christ, consider the load of the devil more supportable and delightful than his, and more easy to bear the yoke of the flesh and the world.

Whence comes it, Lord, that even those who pretend to serve you use you with such lack of consideration and distrust?... You tell us solemnly that your spirit is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; these men prove that the flesh of the hunt is sweeter. The flesh, for shame, of a vile creature, the delights and vanities of this life. Miserable creatures! They judge after hearing only one side! They despise your food, as if it were bitter when they have never even tried it.

### *3. The sad ending to this lack of faith:*

You, who think yourselves to be so wise, prefer to the divine law not all wealth, but this miserable portion which you are able to gather together; for that reason your faith will never be rewarded or

praised. You keep it so hidden that not even the heavenly Father, who sees even the most secret things, would be able to discover it. Thus he will truly say: Amen I say to you, I know you not. You believe firmly that God is just, truthful, that he rewards, that he is infinite goodness, omnipotence and eternal. Well I say to you, imitate the asp, which pretends to be deaf, closing its ears (Ps. 57. 5); lest one day you should hear the voice of the Lord saying to you: Show me your faith without works (James 2. 18). What constancy is there is your faith. You do not not walk the path of the commandments, because it is difficult, rocky and impassable.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

### ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(There is little in St Thomas about the obligations of parents; but he does lay down a first principle from which follow the conclusion concerning care of the body, and *a fortiori*<sup>^</sup> care of the soul.)

#### I. *Principles*:

##### (a) The son is an intimate part of the father:

Parents see in their children something which is their own, a prolongation of their own being. For that reason the love they have for them is like the love they have for themselves (2-2. q. 26. a. 9. c).

So intimate is this sentiment that the commandments of the law of God have not thought it necessary to inculcate the duty of parents towards their children; just as there is no commandment concerning the love we owe to ourselves (1-2. q. 100. a. 5. *ad quum*).

##### (b) The father is the principle and providence with regard to his children:

It is a thing which cannot be either questioned or denied that the father is the principle of the generation, education and teaching of his children (1-2. q. 100. a. 5).

He is like God in this that he is the principle, and therefore to his case can be applied the teaching of Augustine, when speaking of the Creator. He says: God loves us for our benefit and for his honour. To the father, then, is due reverence and honour; but also, in so far as he is the principle of his children, he is their providence (2-2. q. 26. a. 9. *ad iuni et yuni*).

Since it is the mission of providence to take care, in a permanent way, of those beings of whom it is the principle, a father must take care for and provide, not merely in the present, but also for the future of his sons; therefore he has to save, in order to be able to provide for their necessities (2-2. q. 101. a. 2. *ad 2.um*).



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2. *Conclusions:*

Apart from those indicated by St Thomas there are others :

(a) If a father must love his child as he loves himself, it follows that he must take care of his bodily needs and much more so, those of the soul, taking care to provide means of health in the case of either bodily or spiritual illness.

(b) If the father is the principle of life of his children, just as God is, then it also follows that he must be like him in being provident, and therefore he must act like the divine model and take as his goal always the salvation of the soul of his children.

3. *Faith:*

(a) One can only sene God in true faith {*Cont. Gent.* 1. 3, chap. 118):

The divine law' obliges men to admit the truth faith.

i. *To love bodies it is necessary to see them ; to love spiritual things it is also necessary to see them with intellectual vision. Therefore no one can love God, our supernatural happiness, without having seen him. Since in this life a discursive knowledge of God as our supernatural end is impossible, we must take refuge in faith, which wall give us the necessary knowledge.*

ii. *The divine law tries to order the whole man to God, submitting to him both the will and the intellect. The will submits by loving him, the intellect by admitting the truth of those things which he has revealed, wiio can neither deceive nor be deceived.*

iii. *The first commandment ofthat law is the love ofGod. But who can love that which he does not know' ? And that, not with any kind of knowledge, but with one which is exact; because in composite beings it is possible to be right about one part of them and wrong about another; but in the case of God, who is simple, he who is wrong about one thing is wrong about everything. He who thinks that God has a body has never known God, but something quite different.*

Error is a vice of the mind, since truth is its good. The divine law forbids vices. Therefore it is easy to see how wrong is the error of some who say that it does not matter by which faith a man serves God.

(b) The causes of faith (2-2. q. 8. a. 1):

For faith two things are required; the first that man should have put before him the truths which he is supposed to believe, and the second that he should give his assent to them.

In so far as the first element is concerned there can be no doubt that faith comes from God, since he reveals these truths and proposes them to man, either immediately, or through the prophets, apostles, preachers; because even the last speak in his name.



In so far as the interior assent is concerned, we see first of all the exterior causes, such as miracles, persuasive arguments, etc., and the insufficiency of these alone is demonstrated by the fact that, of those who hear the same preaching, one will believe and another will not. It is, therefore, necessary to admit that there is another cause which has an interior influence, moving man to give his assent.

The Pelagians were wrong when they stated that there was only one sufficient cause for this, our free consent, since, once it is admitted that faith is a supernatural act, there must be a supernatural principle which is responsible for the elevation to that order, namely God and his grace.

Science gives birth to, feeds and strengthens those persuasive arguments which explain the motives for faith, but the latter is born of grace, which moves us from within to assent.

As a summary we may say that the internal cause of faith is the will of him who believes, elevated by grace, so that it may perform an act which is outside its natural capacities.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

#### Faith

(Some extracts from the truly great chapter on this virtue in *Christy the Life of the Soul*, pp. 123 ff.)

All holiness for us consists of participating in the holiness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

But how are we to participate in it?—By receiving Jesus Christ who is the one source of holiness. When speaking of the Incarnation, St John tells us that all those who receive Christ are made the sons of God. And how do we receive the Incarnate Word? First, and before all, by faith.

St John then says that it is faith in Jesus Christ that makes us children of God. That is likewise the thought of St Paul: For you are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. Because by faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ we identify ourselves with him; we accept him as the Son of God and the Incarnate Word. Faith yields us to Christ; and Christ introducing us into the supernatural domain, yields us to his Father. And the more perfect, profound, ardent and constant our faith is in Christ's divinity, the more right we have, as children of God, to the communication of divine life. In receiving Christ by faith, we become by grace what he is by nature—children of God; and then our state calls forth an influx of divine life from the Heavenly Father. Our state of children of God is like a continual

prayer: O Heavenly Father, give us this day our daily bread, that is to say, the divine life of which thy Son has the plenitude.

I wish to speak to you of this faith. Faith is the very first attitude we ought to have in our relations with God. St Augustine says: It is primarily faith that subjects the soul to God. St Paul says: Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe. With still greater reason it is impossible, without faith, to attain to his friendship and remain his child.

You see at once that this subject is not only important, it is vital. We shall understand nothing of the supernatural life, of the divine life in our souls, if we do not grasp that it is altogether founded upon faith, *in fide fundati*, upon this intimate and personal conviction of the divinity of Jesus Christ. ... We will now see what is this faith, what is its object, and how it is manifested.

Let us consider what happened when our Lord lived in Judea. When we read the account of his life in the Gospels, we see it is first of all faith that he requires from those who come to him.

We read that two blind men were following him, crying out: Have mercy on us, O Son of David. Jesus lets them approach him, and says to them: Do you believe that I can do this unto you? And they reply, Yea, Lord. Then he touches their eyes and gives them back their sight, saying: According to your faith be it done unto you....

He makes faith the indispensable condition of his miracles. He requires this faith even from those he loves most. When Martha, the sister of his friend Lazarus, whom he comes to raise from the dead, says to him that if he had been there her brother would not have died, our Lord tells her that Lazarus shall rise again. But he wills before working this miracle that Martha shall make an act of faith in his Person: I am the Resurrection and the life; believest thou this?

When he does not meet with faith, he deliberately limits the effects of his power. The Gospel expressly says that at Nazareth: He wrought not many miracles because of their unbelief. ... If I may so express it, Christ's action appears to be paralysed by lack of faith....

But you may say, what is this faith? Speaking in a general way, faith is the adherence of our intellect to the word of another. When an upright, loyal man tells us something, we admit it, we have faith in his word; to give one's word is to give one's self.

Supernatural faith is the adherence of our intelligence, not to the word of a man, but to the word of God. God can neither deceive nor be deceived. Faith is the homage rendered to God as the supreme truth and authority. In order that this homage may be worthy of God, we must submit ourselves to the authority of his word, whatever be the difficulties our minds encounter. This divine word affirms the existence of mysteries beyond our reason; faith can be required from us in things where our senses, our experience, seem to tell us

the very contrary to what God tells us; but God requires our conviction in the authority of his revelation to be so absolute that if all creation affirmed the contrary we would say to God in spite of everything: My God, I believe because thou sayest it.

To believe, St Thomas says, is to give, under the empire of the will moved by grace, the assent and adherence of our intelligence to the divine truth. It is the mind that believes, but the heart is not absent from believing and so that we may make this act of faith, God places in us at baptism, a power, a force, a 'habitude': namely, the virtue of faith, whereby our intelligence is inclined to admit the testimony of God out of love for his truth. That is the very essence of faith, but this adhesion and this love naturally include an infinite number of degrees. When the love that leads us to believe yields us up entirely to the full acceptation, in both our mind and conduct, of the testimony of God, then our faith is perfect; it operates and manifests itself by charity.

Now, what is the testimony of God that we have to accept by faith? It is summed up in this: That Christ Jesus is God's own Son, sent for our salvation and given for our sanctification. . . .

All revelation, it may be said, is contained in the supreme testimony God gives us that Jesus Christ is his Son, and all faith is likewise contained in the acceptation of this testimony. If we believe in Christ's divinity, we believe at the same time in the whole revelation of the Old Testament which has its fulfilment in Christ; we believe the whole revelation of the New Testament, for all that the apostles and the Church teach us is only the development of the revelation of Christ.

Whosoever, then, accepts the Divinity of Christ embraces the whole of revelation. Jesus is the Incarnate Word; the Word says all that God is, all that he knows; this Word is incarnate and reveals God to men. And when by faith we receive Christ, we receive all revelation. Therefore the intimate conviction that our Lord is truly God constitutes the first foundation of our supernatural life. If we understand this truth and put it into practice, our inner life will be full of light and fruitfulness.

There is one point I want to dwell on, which, above all, must be the explicit object of our faith if we wish to live the divine life fully: that is, faith in the infinite value of Christ's merits.

God has made us an immense gift in the Person of his Son Jesus. Christ is a tabernacle wherein are hidden all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge that he has there stored up for us. Christ himself, by his passion and death, merited to communicate them to us, and he is always living, interceding with the Father for us. But we must know the value of this gift and how to use it. Christ, with the plenitude of his sanctity and the infinite value of his merits and credit is this gift but this gift is only useful to us



according to the measure of our faith. If our faith is great, intense, profound, and reaching to the heights of this gift as far as it is possible for a creature, there will be no limit to the divine communications made to our souls by the human Heart of Jesus. If we have not a boundless esteem for Christ's infinite merits, it is because our faith in the divinity of Jesus is not intense enough; and those who doubt this divine efficacy do not know what is the Humanity of a God.. ..

No; God cannot reject us when we thus rely on the power of his Son; for the Son treats with him as equal with equal. When we thus acknowledge that of ourselves we are weak and miserable, that we can do nothing, *Sine me nihil potestis facere*, but that we hope for everything from Christ, all that we need in order to live by the divine life, *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat*, we acknowledge that this Son is everything for us, that he has been established as our Chief and High Priest. . . .

In the same way, when we approach the Sacrament of Penance, let us have great faith in the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. It is this blood which in this sacrament cleanses our souls from their sins, purifies them, renews their strength, and restores their beauty. The very blood of Christ is applied to us with his merits at the moment of absolution, that blood which our Saviour shed for us with incomparable love, those merits which are infinite, but were acquired at the price of measureless sufferings and ignominy. If you knew the gift of God!

Again, when you assist at Holy Mass you are present at the Sacrifice which is the same as that of the Cross; the Man-God offers himself upon the altar for us as he did on Calvary, although the manner of the offering of himself is different. But it is the same Christ, true God as well as true Man, who immolates himself upon the altar in order to make us partakers of his inexhaustible merits. If only our faith were ardent and deep ! . . .

Let us then go to our Lord—he alone has the words of eternal life. Let us first of all receive him with a lively faith wherever he is present: in the Sacraments, in the Church, in his Mystical Body, in our neighbours, in the providence that directs or permits every event, even suffering; let us receive him, whatsoever be the form he takes and the moment he comes, with an entire adherence to his divine word and complete abandonment to his service. . . . In this is holiness. . . .

This faith which is crowned and manifested by love, is lastly a well-spring of joy for us. Our Lord said: *Beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt*. Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed. He said this, not for his disciples, but for us. And why then does our Lord declare blessed those who believed in him? Faith is a source of joy because it makes us share in the knowledge of Christ. He is the

Eternal Word and has taught us the Divine secrets. . . . In believing what he tells us we have the same knowledge as he; faith is a source of joy because it is a source of light.

It is a source of joy too because it places us in radical possession of future bliss. It is a substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not. Jesus himself says\*. He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting. Note the present tense: hath. Christ does not speak in the future tense: he will have, but he speaks of an already assured possession; just as we have already seen that he that believeth not is already judged. Faith is a seed, and every seed contains in germ the future harvest. Provided that we put away from faith all that can diminish and tarnish it; that we can develop it by prayer and practice, that we can constantly give it the occasion of manifesting itself in love, faith places in our hands the substance of the joys to come and gives birth to unshaken confidence.

Let us remain, as St Paul says, grounded in the faith, *in fide fundati*; built up in Christ and confirmed in our faith in him. . . . This faith will be put to the test in this century of unbelief, blasphemy, scepticism, materialism and human respect which surrounds us with its unwholesome atmosphere. If you remain confirmed in your faith, says St Peter. . . this faith will be found unto glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ whom not having seen, you love; in whom also now though you see him not, you believe; and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified. For, he adds, the end and assured recompense of faith is the salvation and, in consequence, the sanctity of your souls (1 Pet. 1. 7-9).

## II. J. B. SCARAMELLI, S.J.

(Some extracts from his *Directorio ascetico y mistico* concerning the methods we can use to protect and increase our faith.)

### 1. *Methods to strengthen our faith:*

#### (a) Ask for it:

The first thing to do is to ask for it, because even though it is true that all the virtues depend on divine grace, there are special reasons for considering this aspect of faith. Simple faith depends on a superior light granted to the mind to enlighten it, and also on a motion which God puts in the will, so that it may command the assent of the intellect. Neither of these two graces are due to us in justice. And if we think of faith once we possess it, then it depends on the four intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, and Counsel, which need the impulse of the Spirit to move them, even after they exist.

We find an example in the case of the apostles, who although they



did not lack faith, prayed for its increase (Luke 17. 5), and another model should be that father who asked Christ to increase his faith (Mark 9. 23).

(b) The practice of it:

Natural virtue is acquired by practice and supernatural virtue is strengthened by it.

The intellect should think on the many motives we have for belief in God and the will should add to this its command, repeating these acts especially with regard to the more august mysteries of the faith, which just because they are so great, give more glory to God. St Teresa said that she believed with greater firmness and devotion in the higher supernatural mysteries because she considered them to be more proper to God.

Some of the Fathers of the Church exhorted the faithful to recite the Creed every morning and evening with attention.

Let it not be thought that such counsels are given only to pious women, but also to the greatest saints, since faith is at the root of all perfection. When St Anthony Abbot was dying surrounded by his monks, who asked him for his last advice, he told them one thing only, to grow ever stronger in faith.

(c) Good works:

Because through them faith becomes more alive and without them it is slowly strangled. James teaches us that, just as the body without the soul is not alive but dead, so faith without good works fails and dies (2. 26). St John calls him a liar who says that he has faith and does not add to this the light of his keeping of the commandments (1 John 2. 4). St Paul adds that such action is to confess God with our lips and deny him in our works (Tit. 1. 16). As our life is, therefore, thus is our faith.

This does not mean that faith is lost with every mortal sin—we can assist at the banquet without a wedding garment—but it does mean that when faith is not joined to works it is feeble and weak.

On the contrary, often good works attain faith for one who has it not, while on other occasions they strengthen it when it is weak. We have an example of the first in Cornelius (Acts 10. 3-4).

*2. Ways of practising the virtue of faith:*

The just man lives by faith, says Paul. What does this mean? It means that just as those who are alive continue to live by the air they breathe, and fish live by the water in which they swim, so the just . . . live a divine life because in all that they think, do or say they rule themselves by the dictates of faith which is supernatural and divine. Very different are these from the men who only live and think in subjection to the senses and their pleasures.



## (a) Prayer:

Coming down to the practical level we may say that vocal prayer should be accompanied by faith, remembering that we are talking to God; mental prayer should be accompanied by thoughts of God, without paying any attention to sentiments or feelings nor resting on them if they are present.

The story is told of Alfonso I of Portugal that on one occasion, when he was about to join battle with the infidels, our Lord appeared to him. The King said to him: Why do you appear to me, who already believe in you? Appear rather to those poor infidels and open their eyes.

## (b) The sacraments:

In confession let no one pause to think of the merits or defects of the priest, but let him think of God who absolves; this will not merely remove all the thousand and one inconveniences which come from looking at the confessor all the time, but it will also increase our faith in this sacrament.

We must prepare for communion as well as possible, being content with the affections which come to us, not like some, who go away dry and without fruit, because they rely all the time on feelings. Blind faith is enough!

## (c) Actions and temptations:

In all our actions remind ourselves of the presence of God. In this way we shall elevate to a high level even the most insignificant actions.

Keep our faith alive in time of temptation, remembering all the time that God never abandons those who have recourse to him. It is the shield of faith which can most effectively protect us from the darts of the enemy.

## (d) Tribulations:

In the midst of these our faith will show us Christ, the man of sorrows, together with the hand of God, which sends them to us, inviting us to repeat the words of Job, The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord. The same faith, like the mother of the Machabees, will show us heaven, the reward for all our sufferings. True fortitude is born of faith; while the constancy which is born of purely natural motives is brittle as glass.

## (e) The practice of virtues:

All the virtues give us an opportunity to practise our faith, with which we shall strengthen it and make its acts more meritorious. If you obey, practise your faith, remembering that it is to God that you are being subject. If you give alms to your neighbour, remember that it is to Christ that you do it.

## in. DAVID GREENSTOCK

(Some extracts from *Christopher's Talks to Catholic Parents* on parental obligations.)

The fundamental obligations of good Catholic parents can be summed up in one simple sentence: they are expected to bring into the world, and to educate, not merely good citizens of the civil State, but mainly good citizens of the Kingdom of God, the Church. Life is a very complex thing, and just because it is complex we have to make quite sure that the more important elements in it occupy the first place. This does not mean that other secondary things should be neglected entirely, but merely that, where there is a question of choice between them and the other more important thing, then they will take a second place. Consequently, although your primary obligation will be to see after the religious education of your children, this need not imply neglect of their secular training. As we shall soon see, the very opposite is the truth, because education is one whole, implying the formation of a complete character, which will be able to stand firm against any possible combination of adverse circumstances, with definite principles of self-government which will be applied no matter what the particular trials which the person concerned may have to face.

The most important thing in life is our eternal salvation, which has to be won by our own efforts aided by the grace of God. Those efforts will be directed mainly against three evils which are outlined for us simply but very accurately in the Catechism, namely, the world, the flesh and the devil. Most of us have to live a Catholic life in the world with all its difficulties, and our eternal salvation will depend on our ability to live that life in harmony with those great principles laid down by Christ, our Master and our Example. Even some Catholics make the mistake of thinking that religion is something which is separate from life as such. They think of it as a part of life which cannot be expected to exercise its influence at every moment of the day. The contrary is, of course, the truth. Religion is necessarily identified with life under all its aspects, running through it as a golden thread runs through a piece of tapestry, forming the whole and directing it to its final end, which is the beatific vision of God in heaven. Your obligation, then, in general terms, is to prepare your children to take up this fight for God in the world and to win it.

We shall lay special emphasis in the course of this book on the importance of the home and the family life in education. Perhaps at the very outset it will be as well to clarify our notions of the importance of the family life in order to avoid repetition later on. It is no exaggeration to say that the home life of the child is the one single

factor in education which can either make or break a character and which can secure eternal salvation. This is true, not merely in the field of religious education as such, but also in that of secular training through all its branches. Notice, we have said that it is the one *single* factor; by which we intend to convey the idea that it is the element in education which controls and governs all the others. If the home and family life is as it should be, the other factors which undoubtedly have a great influence on the child's education will be welded into a coherent whole. On the other hand, if there is something missing in that home life, then those other factors, however important and even necessary they may be, will never supply that lack entirely. For that reason Pope Pius XI, speaking of the conditions which influence the child during his period of formation, says :

“The first natural and necessary element in this environment, as regards education, is the family, and this precisely because so ordained by the Creator himself. Accordingly, that education, as a rule, will be more effective and lasting which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined family; and more efficacious in proportion to the clear and constant example set, first by the parents, and then by other members of the family household” (*Christian Education of Youth*).

This clear statement has even more force today than it had when first written. The whole tendency of our modern society is to belittle the obligations of the parents and to propagate the false notion that either the State or the school can do all that the parents did formerly, and do it ever so much better than they could. Now, this is a very dangerous doctrine, and one which the Church has always resisted and will always resist to the very limit of her power. She has always laid stress on the fact, through her Popes and theologians, that the family has the prior right in this matter of education and that no power on earth can take away that right lawfully. Thus Pope Pius XI, in the same Encyclical, says :

“The mission of education regards, above all, primarily the Church and the family, and this by natural and divine law . . . therefore it cannot be slighted, cannot be evaded, cannot be supplanted. . . .”

There is, however, yet another reason why the duties of Catholic parents are more difficult nowadays than they were, shall we say, in the time of our own parents. Without over-exaggerating the modern difficulties, all must admit that the system and method of modern civilization are not conducive to the living of a good Catholic life in the world as we understand that obligation. It is not so much that man's inclinations towards evil have changed, because they have remained much the same ever since the Fall. The difficulty seems to come from the fact that, in our time, more people have actually followed those evil inclinations and have revolted against the moral law. There has been a slow but effective drifting away



from religion. In past ages those who broke the commandments of God at least admitted that they had done wrong and that they would like to keep that law if they could. Nowadays people refuse to admit that their actions are against the moral law. In a word, the sense of sin has been lost, and with it the idea of the need for God's help and his pardon for wrong-doing. The revolt against God is much more open and unashamed....

For these reasons which we have outlined, and for others too, modern Catholic parents need great supernatural courage. Above all, there is need of a firm resolution which will be put into effective action that our children will be given the very best education which we can provide for them, both spiritually and materially, so that their characters may be fitted in everyway for the struggles which we know to be before them in the world. From the very first day they go to school they are bound to come into contact, in an ever-increasing degree, with the atmosphere of materialism and indifference which pervades modern society. For this reason the education which they receive at home is of supreme importance. It is the family life which will bring them safely through the trials of this life to their eternal happiness in heaven.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. THE EPISTLE

#### A: Caution

##### I. *Tread carefully:*

The apostle says: Not as fools, but as wise men do.... The Latin word *caute* has been variously translated, e.g. as cautiously or with circumspection. The two words do not convey the same idea, although they are both related to the virtue of prudence as integral parts of it. One cannot be prudent unless he walks with both caution and circumspection.

##### 2. *The necessity of prudence in life:*

(a) It is a practical virtue, particularly necessary in those who have to rule over others;

(b) It is a virtue which all Christians should possess so that they may never depart from the true path which leads to the last end. Wise as serpents (Matt. 10.16).

(c) It is a virtue which is poured out upon us: So rich is his grace, that has overflowed upon us in a hidden stream of wisdom and discernment... (Eph. 1. 8-9).

(d) But it is a virtue which grows with practice; that is the reason for St Paul's warning: Walk carefully.

3. *Circumspection and caution:*

Both are parts of prudence.

(a) **Circumspection :**

Examines the circumstances which surround a task—the word means that. Something which is good in itself may be less good or even evil according to the circumstances. To go to church is a good thing, but if it implies a neglect of our home duties it could be bad.

(b) **Caution:**

Removes impediments; it removes the evil things which surround our works and chooses the good.

4. *The rules for caution:*

The apostle outlines them for us:

(a) You cannot afford to be reckless . . . (v. 17) you must grasp what the Lord's will is for you.

(b) Do not besot yourself with wine, that leads to ruin (v. 18);

(c) your tongues unloosed in psalms and hymns and spiritual music, as you sing and give praise to the Lord in your hearts (v. 19).

5. *Remove obstacles:*

(a) **You cannot afford to be reckless:**

Imprudent, stupid and careless is that Christian who does not put away all that could militate against his growth.

(b) **Caution shows him what is good, so that he may do it:**

But before that it also shows him what is evil, so that he may cast it from him. The beginning of perfection lies in the purification of the soul. We need to root out of our souls the thorns of faults, imperfections and defects.

(c) **Caution calls us to mortification :**

We cannot walk this path without a fight against our sensuality, comfort, talkativeness, pride.

6. *Caution in St Paul:*

He leaves all things to find Christ: And all this, which once stood to my credit, I now write down as a loss, for the love of Christ. For that matter, there is nothing I do not write down as loss compared with the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord ; for love of him I have lost everything, treat everything else as refuse, if I may have Christ to my credit (Phil. 3. 7-9).

7. *The caution of the world:*

We see many who receive communion frequently, but after that anything seems good to them. The customs of the world, no mortification, no self-denial. There is no possible prudence without these two elements.

## B: Use of time

1. *An evil because it is changeable:*

(a) You have no means of telling what the morrow will bring. What is your life but a wisp of smoke, which shews for a moment and must then vanish into nothing? (James 4. 14-15).

(b) Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity (Eccles. 1. 2).

2. *Because it passes so quickly:*

(a) Life is like a play, the parts of which are soon over.

(b) Time is but the road to death. We die a little each day, because in each day we lose a little of our life; in growth we decrease . . . on entering this life we already begin to leave it (St Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, 1.13. c. 10).

(c) Life is like a torrent of water, in which drop is poured out after drop, all ending in the sea.

## (a) It is full of miseries:

i. grandeur is a dream;

ii. riches a deceit;

iii. on all sides we see illness, poverty, hunger;

iv. youth is short; old age unbearable;

v. words are carried away by the wind; glory is like smoke; nobility, society, even marriage—all are conflicts, chains that bind us at times;

vi. time is like a mother of many children; cares, losses, sickness, vices; at the end all is a dream.

## (b) It is a deceiver:

i. it imitates eternity;

ii. it takes away one moment from us and then gives us another so that we shall not be aware of our loss;

iii. Ezechias, in his fortieth year, thought that he had just been born (Isaias 38. 1-22).

## (c) It is dangerous:

Surrounded by temptations on all sides.

4. *We have to make use of time:*

It can become useful and good.

(a) It is a talent which God has given us to make use of, to work with;

(b) even though it will pass, it gives place to a blessed eternity;

(c) even though it changes, it proves to us, by that change, the shallow nature of all temporal things;

(d) if it is full of sorrows we can use them to draw nearer to God;

(e) its temptations can strengthen our lives.



5. *The value of time:*

(a) The saints in heaven prove its value to us. So would the damned in hell and the souls in purgatory, were they granted but a moment of it to repent for the folly which had brought them so much suffering.

(b) The sufferings of the present time are not to be compared with the glory which will one day be ours if we make good use of it (Rom. 8. 18).

(c) Happy the man who can finish his life by saying that he has not run the race in vain (Phil. 2. 16).

6. *The use we make of time in the natural order:*

(a) how much time and energy is used is vain—wasted! The mere glance at a newspaper, with its useless items, will teach us this.

(b) the time wasted on such useless things could have given us a new language; that wasted in offices could give energy and time sufficient to set up another; that ill-employed by workmen would be sufficient to start another industry.

7. *In the supernatural order:*

(a) in the task of our sanctification;

(b) in the apostolate.

8. How much time not well used; how much heaven ungained!

## C: Drunkenness

i. *The Scriptures condemn it in the strongest terms:*

(a) The Lord:

Only look well to yourselves; do not let your hearts grow dull with revelry and drunkenness, and the affairs of this life, so that the day overtakes you unawares (Luke 21. 34).

(b) Isaias, to take just one text out of many, says:

Woe upon you, heroes of the tankard, brave hearts round the mixing bowl... (Isaias 5. 22).

(c) St Paul:

Excludes them repeatedly from the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor.

2. *It is a mortal sin:*

Obviously, when the Scriptures condemn it in this fashion. Why?

(a) Because it attacks what is most essential in our nature: Read this piece of St Paul's epistle for today's Mass.

i. we imitate God in the natural order by our rationality, made up of intellect and will;

ii. this sin, by robbing us of our rationality, makes us like brute beasts and rubs out the divine image in us. In the supernatural

order this is even more grave, because the sin is increased through our share in the divine nature by grace.

(b) Because of the number of consequences it brings with it: Once the brake of reason is oft, man becomes lower than the animals; it gives rise to:

- i. the joy of madmen;
- ii. anger without reason;
- iii. infidelity to any promise or pact;
- iv. ruin of health and fortune;
- v. immodesty and lust;
- vi. ruin of family and social life;
- vii. cf. Prov. 23. 20-30; Ecclus. 19. 1-2.

(c) Only inadvertence or some greater need can excuse it:

- i. *therefore it is a grave sin*, when it reaches this point of the loss of reasoning powers; only inadvertence or some greater need (such as that of anaesthetic, etc., of a sick person) can excuse it;
- ii. *as for the acts committed in that state*, they will be grave insofar as they are foreseen. Noe did not sin, because he did not know the strength of wine (Gen. 9. 21), but one who drinks to excess, knowing his weakness, makes himself responsible for the consequences, if experience has taught him that he does commit those sins once he has drunk to excess.

3. *It is a sin against the individual and against society:*

Its causes are many :

(a) Temptation to an easy pleasure. Leaving aside the psychological cases, this is one of the major causes of drunkenness.

(b) Habit—obviously;

(c) desire to escape from reality;

(d) heredity factors, educational environment, etc. ;

(e) revolt against life and its circumstances. Inability to face life as it is.

### Effects

i. *The immediate ones:*

The drunkenness and loss of the powers of reason and will.

2. *After a time:*

(a) psychological ones; weakness of will, loss of interest in business and work, weakened attention, memory, etc. ;

(b) ethical, inability to fulfil one's obligations, waste of money on drink, brutal conduct at home, in contrast to his misery outside the home, etc. ;

(c) bodily signs, trembling of the limbs, atrophy, digestive upsets, renal, hepatic, and blood pressure, etc. ;

## SERMON SCHEMES

(d) social:

- j. <75 per cent of delinquents have alcoholic tendencies;
- ii. leaves its mark on one's children—the heredity factor;
- iii. unhappiness in family life, leading even to murder.

## Remedies

1. *On the part of Governments:*

- (a) propaganda and education; the best methods perhaps;
- (b) higher taxes on drinks over a certain percentage of alcohol;
- (c) prohibition of sale to minors;
- (d) strict laws for the granting of licences, etc.

2. *Natural:*

Alcoholics Anonymous the best answer to date.

3. *Supernatural:*

Useful in some cases, but not always as effective as they might be for lack of preaching and practice, e.g. the pledge in Ireland.

## D: The effects of lust on the intellect

1. *Lust is a sin and a grave one:*

We know this from St Thomas, and that it has the most grave social effects too; but now let us consider something which is not often mentioned, but which could be the object of more direct preaching—its effects on the mind and will of the individual.

2. *Sexual passion and its mental effects:*

(a) The human personality is such that the intensity of one act has an effect on all the rest—we see this in the way mental worry affects digestion, for example.

(b) The more intense the pleasure of an action the more it absorbs the whole attention and energy of a man, so that, should it become a habit, it absorbs the whole man.

(c) When the inferior powers of sense are violently exercised, they impede the normal exercise of the superior powers. You can see this in an spectacle which absorbs the interest and arouses the passion of the spectators; you will see intellects blinded to the extent that they can neither see their true friends nor the merits of the adversary.

(d) There is no passion which is greater than the sensual passion, both in the violence of its attraction or the greatness of the pleasure it gives. Therefore it is logical that it should blind the intellect.

3. *How it does this:*

There are four main acts of the intellect with regard to our actions, and all these are affected.

(a) It prevents our distinguishing good from evil:

Beauty seduced you, says Daniel to one of the judges (13. 56); in effect, blinded by lust, those two judges of the people became



perjurers and assassins. The prodigal son could not distinguish the calm home life and the evil towards which his passions were leading him. Do we not see instances ever} day of people whose passion has led them to break up their home, become unhappy. Let us remember the evils into which the world fell at that time when God, as a punishment for their ill-will, decided to abandon them to their passions (Rom. i. 24).

(b) It stops us from thinking of the end of our actions and the way to realize that end :

Lust acts against these two acts of the intellect, dragging man down, making him act hastily and without thought. The simplest observation shows us the truth of this. We have all known cases of men brought by lust to the sacrifice of fame, reputation, home, without even a moment's thought.

(c) Lack of consideration:

The fourth act is one of the practical judgement, which should command what ought to be done. This act is weakened by the characteristic of lust, which is inconstancy.

### E: Impurity and the will

1. If lust blinds the mind it also turns the will aside entirely from its last end, weakening it all the time. We are concerned here with that integral deviation of the will which is the special effect of impurity. The will is the very helm of our life, whose main operations are two : the choice of the end in view and the means to attain it.

2. *Lust turns the will aside from the end and the means:*

(a) In the choice of the end :

- i. it separates us from God, who should be our last end. Lust makes us seek our own pleasures as our only end ;
- ii. hatred of God—a logical effect of lust.

(b) in the choice of the means.

i. *the choice of God as our end demands that we seek spiritual means to attain God.* The choice of self and pleasure means that we shall logically choose earthly means and despise all that is spiritual ;

ii. *the despising of all that is spiritual.* Examine the sensual person and you will find one who does not appreciate spiritual things, does not pray, nor receive the sacraments with fervour. He dislikes spiritual things.

(c) Natural reasons for avoiding it:

- i. *because it perverts good taste.* It is useless to talk about the things of the spirit to one who is for ever rolling in the mud;
- ii. the wasting of our finest faculties and their weakening.

(d) Spiritual reasons:

i. *God hates this sin.* The punishments against the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha prove this, as do those against the sins of the Jews themselves. God withdraws his grace from the impure, thus charity and supernatural love disappear at once. Faith and hope, although they remain, are weakened. St Ambrose says that as soon as a man begins to give himself up to impurity then he begins also to turn away from the true faith.

ii. *Sensuality corrupts.* The flesh corrupts, the strength of the soul diminishes, the flames of vice increase, the yoke of virtue become a burden, reason is blinded and all passions find easy entrance into the heart.

F: An increase in faith?

1. *The Gospels show us that faith can be greater in some than in others:*

(a) The lowest grade is represented by the father of the mad boy: Help us if thou canst (Mark 9. 21).

(b) The highest and most certain grade is that of the centurion (Matt. 8. 5-14).

2. *Grades of faith:*

To measure the quantity of a habit we may look at two things; one, the object of it, the other the participation of it in the subject of it.

(a) The object of faith:

i. *this can be either God as the supreme truth.,* who can neither deceive nor be deceived—and in this case faith is the same in all men, and there are no grades properly so called;

ii. *however, the object can also be the revealed truths of faith,* and in this case there can be grades, in so far as one man may know more about those objects of faith than another, or he may penetrate them more deeply.

(b) The subject:

It is also possible that one man may participate more perfectly than another in the truths of faith. The act of faith comes from the intellect and from the will.

i. *on the part of the intellect.* The act can be more perfect in one than in another because the former adhere to the truths of faith more firmly and with greater certainty.

The Gospels give us many instances of this, and we may select one person, St Peter, whose faith was at times absolutely certain and at other times vacillating, as on the occasion when he walked towards our Lord on the waters.

ii. *on the part of the will.* Here the habit varies very much from one to another, either because of the greater promptitude in

belief, greater devotion, greater confidence. There are grades of faith here.

### 3. *Practical applications:*

(a) We must avoid a decrease in the certainty of our intellect with regard to our faith:

The Christian should avoid anything which may tend to lead to this decrease. This is especially true of reading, conversations and friends.

(b) Avoid also any weakening in the will, through passions or any other cause:

One of the daughters of impurity is this weakening in faith, and it can lead to its total destruction.

(c) We must make our faith ever more solid:

- i. *Irving the life offaith*, accommodating our actions and our whole lives to the teachings of faith;
- ii. *through the word of God*, in preaching and reading;
- iii. *conversations with people who live their faith*, avoiding others who do not;
- iv. *increase our grace* by the sacraments and prayer.

## II. THE GOSPEL

### A: The faith of the ruler

#### 1. *The good behind misfortunes:*

(a) How many times it is misfortune, illness, our own or someone else's, that leads to Christ!

(b) Sickness or death put some favoured souls in contact with Christ:

- i. the woman of Canaan (Matt. 15. 22-28);
- ii. the father of the mad youth (Matt. 17. 15);
- iii. the widow of Naim (Luke 7. 11-17);
- iv. Jairus (Matt. 9. 22-25);
- v. the ruler of whom we read in today's Gospel.

#### 2. *The growth in his faith, which at first was imperfect:*

(a) He believed that Jesus was truly man, but he did not believe that he was God. He did not seek him at a distance, but took advantage of the fact that he was coming near to Capernaum.

(b) He doubted if our Lord could save him.

(c) Christ chided him from the first moment with this: Unless you see signs and wonders. ...

(d) He demands our Lord's presence in his home, as if he were some doctor or quack, and he asks him to make haste, before the boy dies.



3. *His good dispositions:*

He has these, and also virtues too:

- (a) He seeks Christ—that is a beginning;
- (b) he does so publicly, without fear of the enemies of Christ;
- (c) with great respect and veneration for his person he asks him to come down to his house;
- (d) he begs him: Lord, come down . . .
- (e) he obeys, believes in our Lord's word;
- (f) he ends by being completely converted and with him, his household.

4. *Applications:*

There are souls whose faith is not entirely dead, but only a spark of it is left. Perhaps they may have more faith than they think. They are souls who, in moments of real distress, tribulation, abandonment by the world, which is powerless to help them, approach Christ in their hearts, afraid to make public demonstration of their belief in him.

A wise director can discover this beginning of true faith and should feed it and cultivate it. We should advise such souls:

- i. to read some apologetics and above all, to do some spiritual reading, *The Imitation of Christ*, *Confessions of St Augustine*, etc.;
- ii. treat with spiritual people;
- iii. prayer—above all; ask for an increase in faith;
- iv. make a retreat;
- v. go as soon as possible to confession.

## B: Nicodemus

1. *The faith of Nicodemus:*

(a) He came by night to see Christ, almost certainly because he belonged to that older type of Jew who believed in our Lord but who were afraid to be cast out of the synagogue if they made open profession of that faith. People of faith so weak that they were led away by public opinion and human respect, they loved the glory of men rather than that of God (John 12. 42-43).

(b) He was a sincerely religious Pharisee. There was little or no pride or hypocrisy in his soul, but he was far from being a spiritual man. He wished to serve God and the world; to live in the faith of Christ and not to be an enemy of the Jews.

2. *He was not humble—that stands out in the whole of the episode:*

(a) Rabbi, we know . . . he was a man of learning; but he speaks of the learning of the Pharisees, not of that of faith. He does not say, I confess you to be God; but, We know that you have come as a teacher on behalf of God.

(b) He confesses that: God is with you; but he does not confess Christ to be God.

3. *Reproach of Jesus:*

(a) He makes Nicodemus see that he has not even seen the kingdom which is Christ because he has not been born again—because the spirit of God is not in him.

## (b) He humbles him :

i. He must be born again, because the man to whom Nicodemus refers is bom of the flesh, not of the spirit.

ii. Unless he is re-bom he will not enter.

iii. On hearing Nicodemus' astonished question as to how this can be done, Jesus replies: Are you a Master in Israel and you do not know these things ? You take yourself for a learned man and you do not even know the essentials of the law ? What is more, he reproaches him for not accepting his testimony.

4. *Nicodemus does not abandon Christ:*

He was seeking the truth in good faith.

(a) He defends our Lord against the other Pharisees, without much fervour it is true, and without much courage.

(b) He was opposed to our Lord's condemnation without a hearing (John 7. 51).

5. *The triumph of the faith in Nicodemus:*

It comes about at the death of Jesus.

(a) Faith has now transformed his whole character;

(b) timidity, worldly considerations and cowardice are now at last cast out.

(c) With Joseph he goes boldly to Pilate and asks for the body of Jesus. He does this at the very moment when it was most dangerous to confess belief in Christ; only from truly supernatural motives could a Pharisee declare himself for Jesus at such a time as this, when his party' seemed broken and finished.

## Applications

I. *The case of Nicodemus:*

## (a) that which did him harm:

- i. confidence in his own knowledge;
- ii. living in the midst of the Pharisees.
- iii. fear of social loss ;
- iv. pride.

## (b) He merits grace :

- i. because he sought Christ out;
- ii. he received our Lord's words with a certain meekness, if not with true humility ;
- iii. because he defended Christ among his own;
- iv. because he gave himself fully to Christ at the moment of supreme trial, when even the apostles failed.

2. *Our attitude to souls who seek Christ:*

- (a) Qianity, patience, mildness—even though they be timid and weak;
- (b) not to make another perfect by force of arms, at St Teresa says: respect the laws of psychology in each individual. Respect the operation of grace, at times a very slow one.
- (c) Where we ourselves are concerned, however, we must try all the time to make giant strides in the knowledge and the love of Christ.
- (d) Ask God to grant us a holy courage like that of Nicodemus; tread under foot the world of honours and riches, for the love of Christ.

C: The Samaritan woman

1. *Her meeting with Jesus:*

How different from that of Nicodemus is her story.

- (a) Nicodemus came by night;
- (b) Jesus, weary from his journey, of more than twenty miles, through rocky country, goes in the full sun of a hot day in search of the Samaritan woman. He arranges things in such a way that he remains alone by the well where she comes to get water. Here is the shepherd in search of the lost sheep. One more scene which proves the love of Christ for humble folk.
- (c) He permits the wise of this world to come to see him, but he himself will seek for the others, ignorant, simple folk.

2. *The virtues of the Samaritan woman:*

Her sins were great, but she has great virtues too.

- (a) The doing of her duty. She went to the well to do that duty.
- (b) She was religious, not without some knowledge of the law; the whole of her conversation with Jesus reveals her knowledge of the traditions and religious ideas of her people.
  - i. How is it that thou, who art a Jew, dost ask me, a Samaritan, to give thee drink? (John 4. 9).
  - ii. Art thou a greater man than our father, Jacob?... (v. 12).
  - iii. Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet... (v. 19).
  - iv. Well, it was our fathers' way to adore, on this mountain . . . (v. 20).
  - v. I know that Messiah (that is, the Christ) is to come; and when he comes, he will tell us everything (v. 25).

3. *Above all, humility:*

- (a) This is a simple, ingenuous, candid soul;
- (b) the way she argues, not logically, but by jumping from one thing to another when she sees she is in a corner (so like a woman), shows us a simple heart;
- (c) there is nothing artificial or presuming about her;



(d) she receives Christ's words with meekness;

(e) quite simply she asks him to give her to drink of the mysterious water of which he speaks to her, by which she shews that, although she may not have understood, she believed from the first moment all he said to her;

(f) Above all, she is humble. He makes known her sins to her, and she reacts in a noble fashion, admitting that he is a prophet.

4. *Her progress:*

It is seen in the way she treats Jesus.

(a) She begins with familiarity; How is it that thou, who art a Jew....

(b) she goes on to call him Sir;

(c) she humbles herself to ask for the water he promises;

(d) she calls him a prophet;

(e) she spreads the word round the village; Can this be the Christ?

5. *Contrast with Nicodemus:*

(a) The woman all simplicity and truth; she has no fear of opening up to her own people about her talk with Christ. Nicodemus shews more caution in talking about him in the synagogue.

(b) She immediately puts the problem before her own people; they were, on principle, antagonistic to Jews, almost hated them; now she lays before them the possibility that here may be the Messiah, in the person of a Jew.

(c) Her simplicity and sincerity have their effect, and the village flocks to see Jesus.

(d) In contact with him, those simple souls saw for themselves the truth of the kingdom before them.

i. with much more clearness than Nicodemus saw it at his first interview with Christ;

ii. many of them believed in him because of the woman's testimony—a sinner turned into an apostle;

iii. others believed because of what they heard from Jesus himself.

### Applications

1. Thank you, Lord, for having hidden your divinity from the wise of this world and for having revealed it to simple and humble souls!

2. Lord, put far from us human wisdom which only leads to pride and vanity.

3. Take us by surprise in the ordinary tasks of life, as you did this woman at the well.

4. Even though we may be sinners as she was, keep us simple and humble of heart.

5. Give us that water to drink, Lord, which will spring up into eternal life within us.

D: And his whole household

1. *The household of the nobleman in the Gospel story:*

(a) The Gospel tells us that he himself believed and his whole house—his servants.

(b) The Gospel describes the fidelity, love and comprehension which existed between this man and his servants. When he went to seek Christ he took with him the love of his servants, who shared his feelings. Proved by the fact that they went out to meet him to give him the good news of his son's recovery. He was not only a good and loving father, but also a good master too. That is why the servants feel with him, rejoice with him, are converted with him.

## 2. Domestic happiness in the Scriptures:

(a) The servants of Cana:

They obey Jesus on Mary's advice. They do their duty simply and with discretion and are the first to see the miracle.

(b) The centurion of Capharnaum:

It is obvious that he loved his servants and that they loved him, were faithful to him and obeyed him.

(c) The centurion of Caesarea:

The message given to Peter by his servants shews that he was loved by all of them (Acts 10. 22).

(d) The servants of Lydia:

They also were all converted with her (Acts 16. 14-15).

### 3. *Preaching by example:*

This is repeated many times in the Gospels:

(a) Christ: I have been setting you an example . . . (John 13. 15);

(b) . . . and left you his own example; you were to follow in his footsteps. (1 Pet. 2. 21).

(c) Paul, in many places (cf. 1 Tim. 4. 12; 2 Thess. 1.5; Tit. 2. 7).

#### 4. Example in the home:

Perhaps this is never so valuable as it is in the home. Not only for the formation of the children but also of that of the servants, which is our theme today.

(a) The example of the master and mistress carries the servants along with it;

(b) the judgement of the servants about their masters and mistresses is seldom wrong;

(c) they know them intimately, from personal daily treating with them;

(d) They enjoy the benefits of their virtues or suffer from their defects.

5. We should all keep in mind that the first and most fruitful field of our Catholic activity is the home; we should examine ourselves at our relations with our servants.

(a) If we do not enjoy their love and respect the fault is almost certain to be ours.

(b) Charity, constantly practised in the home, educates, reforms and changes the heart of even the worst of servants.

(c) Those people are very mistaken who go out to practise charity, while at home they are harsh with their servants, perhaps unjust. They should examine their consciences, in case their works of charity may be prompted more from self-love than the love of God and the neighbour.

(d) Charity' begins at home—let us see that it does!

## E: Moral illness of youth

### I. *Youth is sick:*

(a) There is no question of a dead child, as there was in the case of the widow of Naim; today's Gospel shows us a sick child. In that child we can see the whole of youth today.

(b) Youth is a time of danger from within and from without. Perhaps the greatest danger in which youth finds itself is the abandonment on the part of parents and educators, who feel themselves incapable of having any influence on their charges when that influence is more necessary than ever.

(c) For this reason we may say with truth that modern youth is ill. Many parents rejoice in the outward appearance of health in their children, but they are astonished when they discover that their souls are sick. Why? What is this moral illness?

### 2. *All sickness is a disorder, a lack of harmony or equilibrium:*

(a) It is so in the merely physical order:

Man is healthy when each and every one of his organs functions normally. Illness breaks up this harmony. If any single part of the body suffers, the whole harmony is broken up.

(b) In the moral order:

There is also a lack of balance there too. We are dragged down by a nature which has been wounded by original sin. Passion out of control is a fact which is so universal that it need not be doubted for one moment. This is one of the main causes of the illness in youth.

### 3. *Passions in the small child lie hidden:*

(a) There are some small signs of them, self-love, envy, etc.:

They come out fully, and with great force and violence. They rise up then against the will, to fight against it.



(b) Will and the passions:

Here is the great secret of man and of moral health.

4. *Youth is sick if passion is allowed free rein:*

(a) The will is no longer in command:

It is dragged in chains at the chariot wheels of the passions. This is the case in thousands of our modern youth. They live a life of the senses, of the passions, amusements, apathy and laziness with regard to all spiritual things. All these are but symptoms of moral illness.

(b) Look at your daughter:

Do you see one who is vain, frivolous, a flirt, incapable of a noble or generous thought—much less an action? Then she is ill.

(c) Look at your son:

Lover of amusements more than study; lazy, untidy, disobedient, late in at night. You have a son who is sick.

5. *The modern world:*

(a) It is full of the enemies of youth—literature which is bad in every sense of the word; films, newspapers, bad companions.

(b) The best ally of the devil for winning souls for hell is undoubtedly the world. It provides the occasion for the illness by exciting the passions; then it brings death in its train. It is difficult for one to be healthy who is ready to admit the world's criteria as his own, and live accordingly.

6. *The cure:*

There is no doubt that the real cure lies in the hands of the parents; in that good education of which they are the prime factor. Woe to those parents who give no guidance to their children in their times of difficulty!

(a) Good education demands vigilance:

i. keep your children from any bad atmosphere which might harm them;

ii. keep a watchful eye on their companions, friends, amusements, etc.;

iii. any of these things can leave a mark on their souls which it will be difficult, if not impossible, to remove later. Both St Jerome and St Augustine were tempted principally by the thought of their former worldly lives.

(b) Good education demands an ideal:

*[Form your children well, especially in the matter of purity, and remember to train them in its positive aspect, not merely in the negative. It demands renunciation, sacrifice, it is a hard, strong virtue, not something which the weak and soft can practise. Let anyone like that try it and see!]*

ii. *remember that you have a positive obligation of giving your children their necessary instruction in sex matters.* Do not let them pick it up from the gutter, as so many of them do. This is the command of Pius XII, framed in words which leave no doubt in anyone's mind. It is an obligation!

(c) The remedy for your children is Christ:

Religion well taught and well practised. Make sure that they love their faith and practise it.

i. confession, communion, frequent prayer, family rosary—all these things are essential if you are to keep your children morally healthy;

ii. to put out the fires of passion the best thing is to light another and a greater fire—the love of God and of Christ. Pray for them; but don't let it stop at prayer. There must be action—even correction—too.

(d) Now is the time to impose your authority in a proper way, not with harshness or lack of understanding, but with love and kindness.

## F: Prayer, children and example of a good life

### 1. *Worry about our children:*

How far does this reach in moral illness? There are few parents who will not be worried if their children have some physical illness. But there are many, unfortunately, who do not take much care over the moral health of their children.

(a) They are annoyed when they find that their children do not practise their religion, but do they ever stop to think that the reason may be some lack, some neglect on the part of the parents.

(b) There is the story of the mother who took her impossible child to a psychologist, and, after *hearing* the whole story, the doctor sent the child away and treated *the mother!* There is a good deal of religious truth in that story.

(c) They may even be worried about their children's moral health, but do they *do* all in their power *to* cure it? Do they call on the spiritual doctor, on Christ? Do they pray?

### 2. *Prayer:*

(a) This is one of the *finest remedies*, which must be put into operation very early on, before *even* there is any sign of illness!

i. *parents have to pray.* The mother of St John Bosco is an example of this prayer, put *before* young married couples by Pius XII *very often*. She used to kneel down and pray every night with her children, and John Bosco attributed his tender devotion to our Lady and the Eucharist to this prayer. Every home must be a shrine of true devotion;

ii. *parents must pray because theirs is the highest of all vocations: the formation of Christ in their children;*

iii. *but the parents alone are incapable of doing this*—it must be Christ himself who does it. Parents are his helpers, but the chief educator of the children must be Christ. For this reason there must be, between Christ and the parents, a close union. Prayer brings this about.

(b) The children, too, must pray:

They need it because at times youthful energy and amusements, even human respect, make them forget prayer. Parents must know how to overcome these defects in their children.

(c) Parents must increase their efforts for common prayer, family prayer:

We now have the slogan: The family that prays together stays together. Let us make a practical use of it.

Especially we are urged to use the family Rosary; to whom could we go with more confidence than to her who was at one and the same time a virgin and a mother?

3. *Example:*

(a) Pius XII often used the example of St John Bosco's mother—Mama Margarita, as she was called. She did not have to say much; but by her example of hard work she made others work too.

(b) St Teresa recalls the good example she received from her father.

(c) The child has to see in his own home an example of doing good; of good speech.

4. *On the parents is laid the burden of the virtue of their children:*

This is the main thing which you have to leave them in your will and testament. It is worth more than any earthly inheritance. Bend your knees before God and ask him for the grace to bear sons for the kingdom of God. That is your mission as parents. Ask him for this grace, that your children may be saints, men and women of prayer, and work for the kingdom of God; who will pass through the world without being contaminated by it. Men and women of prayer!



*Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost*

**PARDONING INJURIES**

**SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS**

The Epistle: Ephesians 6. 10-17

Gospel: Matthew 18. 23-35

**Texts concerning charity**

*1. We must not hate our enemies:*

Do not nurse resentment against thy brother; put thyself in the right by confronting him with his fault. Lev. 19. 17.

... but for the Edomites thou shalt have no repugnance, they are thy brethren, nor for the Egyptians, in whose land thou didst formerly dwell; their descendants in the third generation may be admitted to the Lord's assembly. Deut. 23. 7.

*2. But we must love them:*

Hungers thy enemy? Here is thy chance; feed him. Thirsts he? Of thy well let him drink. So doing, thou wilt heap burning coals upon his head, and for thyself, the Lord will recompense thee. Prov. 25. 21-22.

But I tell you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and insult you, that so you may be true sons of your Father in heaven, who makes his sun rise on the evil and equally on the good, his rain fall on the just and equally on the unjust. If you love those who love you, what title have you to a reward? Will not the publicans do as much? If you greet none but your brethren, what are you doing more than others? Will not the very heathen do as much. Matt. 5. 44-43. Cf. Luke 6. 27-28, 35.

*3. Returning good for evil:*

Do not repay injury with injury; study your behaviour in the world's sight as well as in God's. ... Do not avenge yourselves, beloved; allow retribution to run its course; so we read in Scripture, Vengeance is for me, I will repay, says the Lord. ... Do not be disarmed by malice; disarm malice with kindness. Rom. 12. 17 ff.

See to it that nobody repays injury with injury; you aim always at what is best for one another and for all around you. 1 Thess.

5. IS.

... not repaying injury with injury, or hard words with hard words, but blessing those who curse you. 1 Pet. 3. 9.

ψ *It must not rejoice at the evil he suffers:*

Not thine to triumph over a fallen foe; that thrill of rejoicing in thy heart over his calamity the Lord will see, and little love; his vengeance may yet change its course. Prov. 24. 17; Eccles. 8. 8.

-, *The love for our enemies recommended by Christ:*

You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you that you should not offer resistance to injury; if a man strikes thee in thy right cheek, turn the other cheek also towards him; if he is ready to go to law with thee over thy coat, let him have it, and thy cloak with it; if he compels thee to attend him on a mile's journey, go two miles with him of thy own accord. Matt. 5. 38-41.

6. *The example of Christ:*

And when they reached the place which is named after a skull, they crucified him there; and also the two criminals, one on his right hand and the other on his left. Jesus meanwhile was saying, Father, forgive them: they do not know what it is they are doing. Luke 23. 33-34.

7. *The example of Stephen:*

Thus they stoned Stephen; he, meanwhile, was praying; Lord Jesus, he said, receive my spirit; and then, kneeling down, he cried aloud, Lord, do not count this sin against them. And with that, he fell asleep in the Lord. Acts 7. 58-59.

8. *Reconciliation:*

If thou art bringing thy gift, then, before the altar, and rememberest there that thy brother has some ground of complaint against thee, leave thy gift lying there before the altar, and go home; be reconciled with thy brother first, and then come back to offer thy gift. Matt. 5. 23-24.

9. *Charity between brethren:*

Hatred is ever ready to pick a quarrel; love passes over all kinds of offence. Prov. 10.12.

How is it that thou canst see the speck of dust which is in thy brother's eye, and are not aware of the beam which is in thy own? By what right wilt thou say to thy brother, Wait, let me rid thy eye of that speck, when there is a beam all the while in thy own? Thou hypocrite, take the beam out of thy own eye first, and so thou shalt have clear sight to rid thy brother's of the speck. Matt. 7. 3-5.

Then Peter came to him and asked, Lord, how often must I see my brother do me wrong, and still forgive him; as much as seven times? Jesus said to him, I tell thee to forgive, not seven wrongs, but seventy times seven. Matt. 18. 21-23.

I have a new commandment to give you, that you are to love one another; that your love for one another is to be like the love I have

borne you. The mark by which all men will know you for my disciples will be the love you bear one another. John 13. 34-35. Cf. Rom. 12. 10; 13. 9; Gal. 5.14; Eph. 5. 2; Col. 3. 13; 1 Thess. 4. 9; Heb. 13. 1; 1 Pet. 4. 8; 1 John 3. 23; 4. 7.

10. *Forgive:*

. . . and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. . . . For our heavenly Father will forgive you your transgressions, if you forgive your fellow-men theirs; if you do not forgive them, your heavenly Father will not forgive your transgressions either. Matt. 6. 12 ff.

My brethren, if one of you strays from the truth, and a man succeeds in bringing him back, let him be sure of this; to bring back erring feet into the right path means saving a soul from death, means throwing a veil over a multitude of sins. James 5. 19-20.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

### I. LITURGICAL

Usually the different formulas of the liturgy do not form a logical whole, being rather the fruit of piety than of logic. However, it is useful to seek some unity, even though it may be rather arbitrary, to help the preacher and the faithful. In today's Mass we shall seek this unity through the medium of the two main elements in it, namely, the Epistle and the Gospel.

In the Gospel we see man under a double aspect, one in relation to God and another in relation to his fellow-men. With reference to God he is a debtor; in relation to his fellows he is a creditor. The end of the parable is to teach us that we must pardon those who owe us something if we wish to obtain pardon ourselves.

i. *The idea of pardon:*

There is not much in today's liturgy about this idea of pardon, but if we look at the liturgy as a whole there is plenty. There are the two ideas of unity and peace, for example, the enemies of which are hatred, vengeance, refusal to forgive. The including of the Our Father in the Mass after the Canon and as a preparation for Communion, followed by the *commixtio* of the Body and Blood, the *Agnus Dei* and the symbolic kiss of peace is only a practical way of expressing the ideas of Christ: If thou art bringing thy gift, then, before the altar . . . (Matt. 5. 23). It is impossible to offer Mass fruitfully if we do not forgive our brethren.

2. *Man the debtor:*

The other idea of the Gospel, that man is in God's debt, has been paraphrased in various parts of today's Mass. The Church, faced



with the end of the liturgical year and the Gospel of the Last Judgement, thinks about the soul, loaded down with its sins and groaning under the hand of divine justice. This state is described in the Offertory in the figure of Job; indeed, we might almost say that the Offertory gives us the true sense of the meaning of today's Mass. In the figure of Job we can see fallen humanity, loaded down with sins and confronted with divine justice.

### 3. *The theme of sin:*

From this it will be easy to see why the main theme of this Sunday is sin. It fits in with the Gospel and with the rest of the Mass. However, there is one thing to be added. The reader may be left with a certain pessimism with regard to sin, and such a thought is alien to the idea of the liturgy and also to the Christian mentality. It is contradicted by Paul: We are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his design (Rom. 8. 28).

Sin should not make us despair, even if we have fallen into it. Even sin may be one of these things which God uses for our good (St. Thomas, 1-2. q. 87. a. 2. *ad lum*). It leads us to God's mercy (Gospel); makes us rely on his strength (Gradual); teaches us to use the divine armour to protect ourselves (Epistle), and to pray in union with the Collect: We beseech thee, O Lord, that thou wouldst keep thy family in thy eternal goodness, so that, under the hand of thy protection, it may be free from all adversity and devoted to good works in thy name.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Ephesians 6. 10-17

#### 1. *Draw your strength from the Lord . . .*

The Lord is the source of our strength, it is his power which sustains us. We can rely on the help of Christ, in whose army we have enlisted. There will be trouble and temptations from the world, but he has overcome the world (John 16. 33). The theme is: Have courage, but at the same time arm yourselves and be on the watch.

#### 2. *You must wear all the weapons in God's armoury . . .*

This is the whole argument; we must use all the weapons at our disposal if we wish to resist the attacks of the devil. One who fights at the orders of a leader receives his arms from him; the greater the leader the better the arms. But when the leader is God then we must add something else, not only do we fight with his weapons but he fights within us.

However, we must not forget that the enemy is the devil, and he is astute; he fights with ambushes and tricks. He makes himself out

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to be an angel of light ! He tries to mix evil with virtue in such a way that we do not see what he is doing. Examples ? From the case of Adam to our own last temptation ! The word *resist* has almost the meaning of holding on to the last position under enemy fire. Those who went through the war know what that means.

### 3. *It is not against flesh and blood . . .*

The words do not refer to sensuality, they refer to human things, earthly things. The Greek words give us the sense of a fight between two people, a duel. It has the sense of a wrestling match, in which the victor is the one who manages to hurl his adversary to the ground and press his shoulders against it.

### 4. *we have to do with principdoms and powers . . .*

In the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians we have this mention of the division of the angels into choirs ; now we see that the same type of division exists among the devils, whom St Paul places in the air, so as to indicate that they are not earthly powers. They have the mastery of this world, as apart from God who is the Lord of the Universe.

### 5. *God's armour . . .*

St Paul gives us the details, taking his example from the arms of the Roman legionary.

### 6. *your loins girt with truth . . .*

This idea is taken simply from the Hebrew fashion of girding up the tunic in order to be ready for work. The ancient writers took this girdle to be chastity, but that is no more than a pious interpretation ; St Paul prefers the idea of *truth*. This is the virtue which most distinguishes a Christian ; it is the truth of Christ. This truth is not merely an admission or assent of the mind to Christ ; it is a way of life, a purity of intention which implies action.

### 7. *the breastplate of justice fitted on . . .*

Is this the cardinal virtue of justice or does it stand for the whole of justification, i.e. sanctifying grace and the attendant virtues ? One can hold either opinion ; but it is worth while remembering that St Paul himself says that it is made up of faith, animated by charity (1 Thess. 5. 8). In which case it is a just life which is the best defence against the enemy.

### 8. *your feet shod . . .*

Not a very clear phrase, but it would seem that he is referring to the security and speed given to the Roman soldier by his special shoes. This is compared to that given to us by the Gospel of peace, provided we live by it.

### 9. *take up the shield of faith . . .*

The oblong Roman shield, heaviest of all in use at the time - strapped on the left arm, it protected the whole body. The thought

comes easily to Paul, familiar with the story of Abraham, who merited praise for his faith, and God who promised to be his shield (Gen. 15. 1-6). Faith does defend us against temptations, and even in Christian language we speak of men of strong faith who cannot be moved, even in the midst of the worst calamities. Faith in God, in his law, in his promises and punishments, is the best defence against any attack, even though the latter be compared to that of the fire-tipped arrows which terrified the Romans.

10. *make the helmet of salvation your own . . .*

In St Paul this is also described as hope in salvation (1 Thess. 5. 8). This hope in Christ, our Saviour, defends something as vital to us as the head.

11. *and the sword of the spirit . . .*

We pass on to the offensive weapons. This time it is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God and his inspirations, contained in the Scriptures, and which Christ himself used when he was tempted. Well meditated and applied, this is the greatest form of attack against Satan and his arms. Unfortunately the liturgical section stops at this point, but not Paul's thought; because he goes on to the idea of prayer. Then indeed the sword will be double-edged, made up of the word of God and prayer.

## B: The Gospel: Matthew 18. 23-35

1. *Historical situation and argument:*

Like all the parables of mercy, this is one which is most carefully developed by our Lord, even though it has an element of severity in it which only serves to bring out more strongly the idea of mercy. Peter it was who gave the occasion for this parable when he asked our Lord how many times he should forgive his brother, seven times? giving the number of perfection, to a Jew. The setting of the parable is obvious; there are three scenes:

- (a) the king pardons a servant his large debt;
- (b) the servant is severe with his fellow-servant;
- (c) because of this the king goes back on his former pardon.

2. *Texts:*

In their explanation we can save much time since they have been so well explained by John Chrysostom, Bourdaloue and Massillon.

3. *The first scene:*

(a) **The king:**

This king, so far as we are concerned, is God, and the truth is that we have nothing which is not his.

(b) **He wished to take an account of his servants:**

That day will come, infallibly, whether we like it or not; and as usual, the longer he waits, the more complicated the accounts



become, because his servants interpret his delay as carelessness or indifference. In many parables our Lord has told us not to abuse his mercy.

(c) Ten thousand talents:

The interesting factor here is the enormous debt, not how it was possible for the servant to have stolen such a large amount. The quantity is equivalent to over a million pounds sterling. This enormous sum represents the gravity of sin, infinite in the dignity of the Person offended by it and increased because of the gratitude due to our benefactor. What man owes to God in recompense for one mortal sin and the impossibility of his paying it are both represented in this sum of money.

(d) his master gave orders that he should be sold . . .

The law allowed this, but the idea of Christ is to stress the impossibility of paying the debt and the punishment he had deserved.

(e) the servant fell at his feet . . .

Petition for pardon. Repentance is necessary and God does not wish to pardon without it; it is a natural requisite after all. The fact that the man fell on his knees gives the idea of repentance; he admits his guilt.

(f) Have patience with me . . .

In such circumstances a man will promise anything. But how and from what source could he collect such a sum of money? We, on the other hand, can pay what we owe God, because we have an open letter of credit based on the merits of Christ, applied freely to us, with the sole condition that we repent and seek the sacrament of penance. We can pay even the last farthing, but anything which might escape the efficacy of the sacrament of penance, or our act of perfect contrition, can be paid in the coin of indulgences.

4. *The second scene:*

On leaving his Master the servant, still under the strong emotion of what he had been through, meets a fellow-servant who owes him the small quantity of £11. We need not dwell on the drama of the scene; it is enough if we attend to the vast difference between what our neighbour owes to us and what we owe to God. Indeed, the vast majority of offences committed against us are purely imaginary, since lack of intention on the part of our neighbour and little thought usually diminish his guilt and make the fault almost negligible. If the debt is different, so is our manner of acting towards our neighbour. We would never permit him to act towards us as we act towards him. It is not merely a question of pardon of offences but other virtues which affect our neighbour and which we neglect (cf. St Francis de Sales, *in loco*).

r. *Third scene:*

(a) The rest of the servants went in to tell their master . . .

An ornamental detail, but one which can serve to preach on the obligation of denouncing evil at times. It can arise either from the common good or else for the good of the sinner.

(b) thou wicked servant . . .

He was not called wicked when his debt was discovered, but his master calls him wicked now when he discovers his cruelty. It would seem that God feels our cruelty towards our neighbour more than he does the sins committed against himself. There is a reason: He who does not love his brother, whom he sees, how can he love God, whom he does not see ? (1 John 4. 20).

(c) was it not thy duty . . . ?

For two reasons; first of all, I have taught you by my example how to act; secondly because every Christian should know that Christ has chosen to identify himself with those in trouble or sickness . . . or even debt! When we pardon one of these it is him we are forgiving!

(d) gave him over to be tortured . . .

There is no question of sin, once forgiven, causing guilt again; but there is a question of falling back into the same sin again, especially since this implies base ingratitude towards God.

(e) It is thus that my Heavenly Father will deal with you . . .

*Thus*, both terrible and consoling. If you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven; if you do forgive, your own offences will be pardoned you. To solve the problem of our judgement we have a simple solution—forgive others. This pardon of others is the most sure guarantee of our love for God. He who forgives his enemies does not do it from any natural inclination, but only because it is the will of God.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

(He has two Homilies which can be applied to this Sunday, one dealing with fraternal correction {*Hom.* 50) and the other directly applied to an exposition of the Gospel (5L. PG. 30, 583-596).)

#### 1. *The reward of those who forgive:*

This is a new reason which the Lord adds for the removal of all hatred between Christians. He does not talk now of sufferings or punishments, but of the reward which the heavenly Father will

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give in return for Christian concord and peace. Obviously, it is not enough to pray together, it is also necessary to ask in a fitting manner, because one who asked, for example, for vengeance or for something not conducive to his salvation, will not be heard. However, charity is so important in prayer that it is almost as though the Lord said to us: If there is anyone who loves his neighbour, having loved me first of all, I will be with him . . . We see that there are many whose friendship is due to other causes. One loves because he is loved; another because he is honoured, this one because such friendship is useful in his business, another for similar reasons; but it is difficult to find one who loves his neighbour for Christ's sake. . . . For Christ Paul loved, and for that reason, even when his love was not returned, his charity' did not disappear, because it was too deeply rooted.

### 2. *The firmness of charity:*

One of the easiest ways of finding out if our love is truly Christian or not is to see if it vanishes in the face of some injury, envy, vain-glory or desire for money. It has no spiritual roots, because if it had, the things of this world would never be able to break the bonds of the spirit. Charity which is founded on Christ is stable, firm, invincible, nothing can destroy it, neither calamities, dangers, calumny, nor even death itself. . . . Even though he who loves like this suffers a thousand misfortunes, his love will never find itself in danger, nor will he stop loving; because one who loves in order to be loved in return, if he sees ingratitude, loses his love; but one who loves for Christ is never tired of loving. For that reason Paul says that charity' never passes away. What can you argue? That he to whom you have done honour has injured you? That he on whom you heaped benefits has sought to kill y'ou? If you love for Christ, this will only increase your love, because that which breaks up other kinds of love increases this one. How? First because that man increases your reward; secondly because it is he who needs more help and work. Therefore he who loves thus does not look at lineage or blood, or riches or thanks, or anything like that; rather, even though he be hated, injured, killed even, perseveres in his love. He always finds a just cause for loving, which is Christ, and so he remains firm and immutable in his love.

### 3. *How Christ loved his enemies:*

Thus did Christ love his enemies, those who were ungrateful, who blasphemed against him, who hated him, who could not stand the sight of him, those who prepared the stones and the cross for him. He loved them with such great charity' that there could be none greater. Greater love than this no man hath. . . . See how he cares for those who crucify him and insult him in their anger; see him talking to his Father, when he says, Forgive them, for they



know not what it is they are doing. Even after that he sends them his disciples. Let us imitate this charity and follow our Lord's example.

4. *The parable:*

(a) How many times must I forgive my brother?

When the sinner grows obstinate in his sin, you have laid down a limit, Lord, beyond which he must be considered as the heathen and the publican (Matt. 18. 17). What limits do you place on his repentance, then? None at all; you will forgive him an infinite number of times. . . .

So that this precept may not be too difficult for us, the Lord adds a parable, in which he shows us that it is not difficult, but easy. He shows us his kindness, so that, by comparison, we may learn to forgive seventy times seven times and consider our neighbour's sins as a drop of water in relation to ours, and as even less in comparison with that mercy and immense goodness of God, of which we stand so much in need when we stand before him to be judged and render an account.

(b) He owed him ten thousand talents. . . . he owed him a hundred pence:

There you have the difference between the sins committed against God and those committed against man . . . a difference which comes from the fact that there is also a difference between the persons and the number of the sins. When some man sees us we are ashamed to sin against him; God sees us all the time and we feel no shame at all. What is worse, we sin against him in a bare-faced manner. Not only that, the benefits and honours we have received increase the gravity of our crimes. . . . I will answer you in a few words. . . . I will put before you the sins which men commit daily against God, not the sins of one person, but the common crimes of all, so that each one may examine his conscience and his own sins. But before that I would speak to you on the great benefits we have received from God.

(c) The benefits we owe to God !

He made us from nothing, created for us all that is visible in creation, the sea, the heavens . . . he gave us a living soul, placed us in paradise, gave us a companion and put at our service all the animals, clothing us with glory and honour, as the lords of the world. . . .

And after man had showed himself ungrateful to God, he gave him even greater gifts. Do not put all your attention on the fact that God cast man out of paradise, rather think of the good which came to us through that, because almost at the very moment when that happened, he established the new order of things, in which he sends us his Son to redeem those who had hated him, in spite of

all his benefits; he opens heaven for us, and makes of us ungrateful ones, his sons. This is certainly the moment to say: O the depths of the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God. He has given us baptism for the remission of our sins, he has freed us from slavery', making us heirs to his kingdom, he has held out his hand to us, promising us a thousand good things if we act righteously, he has poured out his spirit into our hearts. . . .

(d) Our behaviour:

And after so many benefits, what has been our behaviour, what have we done ? Even if we were to die a thousand times for him who has loved us so much, do you think that it would be sufficient gratitude ? No, since he gave all things for our good. And in what coinage do we repay him ? By breaking his laws daily. So that you will not be too annoyed, let me tell you that I am accusing myself. Where would you like me to begin, with the slaves or the freemen, with the military, civilians, princes or subjects, women or men, old or young ?...

(e) The sins of working men :

Let us treat of the workers, those who seem to gain their living by the sweat of their brow and hard work, and yet. . . they are the first to use tricks in buying and selling, adding to this lies, oaths; all in favour of their avarice ; so intent upon the things of this world that they do not think of anything except money and never think of giving alms.

(f) Owners:

Think of the landowners, those who grow rich by their fruits. Will you find anyone so evil as these ? See how they act with the unfortunate labourers; you will soon detect their cruelty, because they weigh down those unfortunates who work all their lives, with impossible rents, hard labours as if they were asses or mules; worse still, as if their bodies were made of stone, without giving them a breathing space and with no reward, whether the harvest be an abundant one or so poor that they do not know how to live after the hard work of the winter. Overcome by work, the rains, the cold, they come with empty hands, terrified at the thought of storms, taxes, even more than of hunger itself. . . Such landowners fill their barns with the fruits of the labours of the poor and they will not even allow them to take a small share to their homes, being content to throw them a small sum of money, very small in comparison with their labours.

(g) . . . that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he possessed . . .

It was not an excessive punishment, since they were all slaves; however, the Lord said it so that the man might recognize the extent

of the debt. Proof of it is the fact that he went beyond what was asked of him. The man asked him for time to pay, and he forgave him all the debt. From the very beginning he was willing to grant this, but he did not want to do it as a gift, but as something due to the pleas which were made to him, so that the debtor would not go away without merit or reward. . . .

(h) The behaviour of the servant:

Up to this point the servant acts well, he admits his sin and asks for pardon; but as soon as he has obtained it he does not remember his port of refuge or from what he has been saved. Instead he acts with cruelty against his fellow-servant. What are you doing, man? Don't you realize the implication? Do not deceive yourself or sharpen the sword against yourself or revoke the favourable sentence. But he does not think of that; and even though the debt owed him was less and the punishment also, he rises up against the poor debtor.

(i) I forgave you all the debt. . .

You should have looked at your past gain and also towards the future. If the precept is a burden to you, think of the reward and do not remember the harm that has been done to you, but only the fact that you have received the pardon of a God offended, and that by a simple plea. If it still seems hard to you to forgive a friend, it is even harder to fall into hell.

When he owed ten thousand talents the Lord did not take it ill; but now that he has proved himself harsh with his fellow-servant, then it is that he is called a wicked servant. Listen to this, you who are avaricious, because it is addressed to you. Hear it, you who will not have mercy, because you are not merciless to others, but to yourselves.

(j) Applications:

There are two things which the Lord has in mind: that we should confess our sins and that we should forgive others theirs. He who thinks of his own sins will be merciful to others. But we must pardon from our hearts, not in mere words, so that we may not sharpen the sword against ourselves.

We can turn to our advantage the offences of the neighbour against us. Never say that he has poured out injuries upon me, he has calumniated me, heaped ills upon me, because the more of these that you bear, the greater good the neighbour has done you. He has given you a chance to obtain pardon for your sins, for the greater the harm he has done you, so much the more chance of pardon for your sins. No one can do us harm, not even the devil—he could not harm Job (2. 1, 10). All is made for us a motive for reward. Think for a moment of all the good which comes to you from the



offences of your enemies: first and foremost, the pardon for sin· second, patience and perseverance; third, meekness . . . fourth, to live without hatred, a good which is superior to all others, because he who has it is free from afflictions, from sorrows and from travail, he has no enemies, obtains easily the mercy of God and an easy pardon.

Has he done you a great harm ? Have pity on him, it is not you who have offended God, but he. Think of Christ, who, when he was going to be crucified, did not think of himself but of those who crucified him. . . . But the fact is that he did me harm before all men! Therefore he dishonoured himself before all, opened their mouths to criticize him and to praise you. But he calumniated me! Very well, but who is going to ask for the rendering of accounts, those who heard him, or God? . . . You have been calumniated before men, and your accuser before God. . . . If it may seem difficult to you to imitate God, think of men. Think of Joseph, who suffered so much from men, but filled them with good things (Gen. 45. 15-24). Think of Moses, who prayed for the Jews even though they had set so many traps for him. Of Paul, persecuted by his own, yet willing to be an anathema for them. Of Stephen, stoned by them, yet asking for their pardon.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(He has many sermons on this theme, some as commentaries on the Gospel of today, others to the higher ranks of catechumens ; but the ideas are always the same : Forgive, so that you may be forgiven.)

### 1. *Forgive us our trespasses* . . .

What we say afterwards we must say always, because it is nothing but the truth. Who, living in this flesh, has no debt to pay? Which man can live in such a way that he does not have to make this petition? It would be well for all to imitate the publican and not to be puffed up, as was the Pharisee, who made a show of his merits and hid his wounds. He knew where he was going who said: God be merciful to me, a sinner. It was the Lord Jesus, remember it, my brethren, who taught us this prayer and who gave it to his first disciples, our great guides. If those shepherds of the flock had to plead for the forgiveness of their sins, what of the flock itself?

### 2. *The sinner forgives the sinner:*

I would use this language even if you had no sin from which you would wish to be cleansed. But whoever you are, you are a man. If a lay person, you are a man ; if a cleric, you are still a man ; if a monk, you are a man; if a bishop, you are a man; if you are an apostle you are still a man. Listen, then, to an apostle who speaks to you : If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves (1 John 1. 8).

He himself, John, whom Christ loved above the others, who rested on his breast, it is he who says: If we should say. . . . If then, my brothers, we are in sin, let us pardon those who seek that pardon from us. Let there be no room in our hearts for enmities, because such things poison the heart.

3. *Every man, God's debtor:*

This parable has as its purpose our instruction, and is a warning to free us from perdition. Thus, he says, will my heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one of your brothers from your hearts. The precept is crystal clear, my brothers; the warning most useful and obedience to it most advantageous. There is no man who is not in God's debt and a creditor where his brethren are concerned. Who is he who is not God's debtor except the man who has no sin whatsoever? And who is he who has no creditor among his brethren except the man against whom no one has sinned? . . . Every man is a debtor and has a debt owed to him. Thus God, in his justice, has given you a norm which he will follow as well as you. There are two works of mercy which the Lord has laid down in the Gospels: Forgive and it shall be forgiven unto you. Give and it shall be given unto you. There is the rule for our salvation. . . . There is talk here of pardon. If you want to be forgiven, you have also a brother whom you can forgive. There is also talk of help. If the beggar asks help of you, you also are a beggar before God. In prayer, are we not all beggars?

4. *Pardon to be pardoned:*

As often, therefore, as we say: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us, let us say it sincerely and from the heart, and let us do what we say. It is a promise we make to God: Your God says to you: If you forgive, so will I. You do not forgive? Then you fail yourself, I do not. My dear sons, I know what relation this prayer has to us: . . . Listen then; you are about to be baptized; forgive; he who has any enmity against another, let him forgive it from his heart. If you enter into the baptismal font with these sentiments then you can be sure that all will be forgiven you. The sin of origin, which comes to you from Adam through your parents, a sin because of which you, like children, seek the grace of the Saviour; and those sins which, in your lives, you may have added, in word, deed or thought. All will be pardoned you, and you will come forth, free from your debts, just as if the Lord in person had pardoned you.

5. *The same idea in another form:*

You, whoever you are, who live the Christian ideal and long to attain to his promises, do not be careless and do what is commanded you. What did he promise? Eternal life. And what did he command?



That you should pardon your brother. O man, give pardon to man, and I will come to your heart. . . . Do you not wish to receive from God that which he orders you to give to your brother? Tell me that you do not wish for it and that you do not pardon. And what grace is this, except pardon when you ask for it. He will give it to you if you also pardon when it is asked of you.

As we forgive them that trespass against us. He has made a law, laid down a condition. Do you pardon as I do. He will not forgive unless you also forgive. . . . These conditions have been laid down by the supreme Judge in heaven; there is no deception in them; use his own words if you like; Forgive us, as we forgive . . . and do what you say. If anyone lies in his plea, then no attention is paid to it. He who lies in his plea loses his case and is punished. . . . If you lie in your prayer, that very prayer betrays you. God needs no witnesses to convince you because he who made your plea is also your lawyer. If you lie, he is the witness of it; if you do not correct your ways, he is your judge. So, say it and do it. If you do not say it you will not attain it; if you say it and do not act on that, you will be guilty of a lie. . . . Can we remove this phrase from our prayer?

6. We have heard in the Gospel that we should forgive our brother, and it is not enough to forgive once or twice, but as often as he offends against us. Nay, if he does thee wrong seven times in a day, and seven times in the day comes back to thee and says, I am sorry, thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17. 4). If you keep in mind the meaning of the number seven you will understand that by seven we must understand as many times as he offends you, because it is a universal number according to the Scriptures. . . .

7. *Pardon everything:*

If, finally, we want to be forgiven, we must be ready to forgive all and every offence against ourselves. If we meditate on our sins and count diem, sins committed through sight, hearing, thought and innumerable movements, then I doubt if we would sleep at nights. That is why we ask daily, knocking at the divine door, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. What trespasses? Some or all? You will reply: All. Then you must do likewise with your debtor. You are the one who establishes that rule and measure, and in your prayer you invoke it in your favour . . . as we forgive them that trespass against us.

8. *At least those who ask you for pardon:*

I see something which can console, not merely the small number of good Christians, but also the greater number of the rest; I know that you will be anxious to hear it. Christ said: Forgive, and you will be forgiven. And in prayer what is it that you say? Forgive us as we forgive them that trespass against us. That is to say, Forgive



us, heavenly Father, as we also forgive others who have offended us. This is what you must do, under penalty of not being forgiven, but condemned; pardon at once the enemy who asks your forgiveness. Is that too much for you ? Is it asking a great deal to love one who humbles himself? He bows low and you hate him! I would have preferred that, even though you may have been the victim of evil actions, you would have remembered the words of Christ, Father, forgive them, for they know not what it is they are doing. What more could I desire than that you should turn your eyes towards God, who acted like that, even at the very moment when you were offended ? Perhaps you may say to me : He did that, but he was the Son of God, the Only Begotten, the Word made flesh ; but how can I do it, evil and earthly as I am ? If the action of the Lord is too much for you, think of his servant, think of Stephen. While they were stoning him, on his knees he prayed for his persecutors, saying: Lord, impute not this sin to them. They threw stones, they did not ask his pardon, but he prayed for them. That is what I want from you. Take courage, lift up your hearts; lift them up—and pardon your enemies. If you cannot love them when they offend you, at least pardon them when they ask for your pardon. Love the man who says to you : Brother, I have sinned ; forgive me. If you do not pardon then, I will not say that you have wiped out the prayer from your heart, but rather that it is wiped out from the book of God.

### m. ST ISIDORE

#### 1. *He would take an account of his servants:*

There is nothing hidden from God; wherefore do not speak a vain word in your hearts, because you must not imagine that such a word lies hidden from God. All that lies apparently hidden will be made known, and remember that all you do, no matter how secretly, will he make manifest. The very walls will not keep our secrets. Wherefore avoid sins, because you cannot hide them. . . . You will be guilty in the divine eyes, even though no one has seen you. Where God is, there his spirit fills all things, sees all things, and all is touched with the might of his power, outside him there is nothing; nothing hidden from his knowledge; he will not allow anything to be hidden from him. He knows our thoughts and penetrates into the very depths of our hearts. He knows even those things which a man does not know about himself.

#### 2. *Tremble:*

Fear is a good thing; it puts sin on one side, checks vice, makes a man careful and solicitous. Where there is no fear there is only dissipation, perdition, death and all other evils. . . . Do not be sad in your illness and give thanks to God for your very weakness. He

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desires to see you strong in spirit rather than in body; your mind strong rather than your flesh. . . . Pain hurts the body, but heals the spirit. Weakness reduces vices and the powers of sensuality.... If fortune smiles on you, do not be proud; if adversity comes your way, do not weaken. . . . Be moderate both in prosperity and adversity. You know that he proves you with adversity so that you will not break, and with prosperity so that you will not be proud.

### 3. *He asked for pardon:*

May the earth be for you just a place on which you can prostrate yourself. You are but dust and ashes after all; so sit there in the dust and on the ashes, and weep, groaning and sighing from your heart. May tears stream from your eyes continually. . . . As your evil intention was intense at the moment of your sin, so let your contrition be. As you threw yourself into the pit of destruction, so climb out of it. The medicine must be proportioned to the illness; as the wound is, so must be its cure. Great lamentations correspond to great sins. . . . Keep up the hope in your heart, together with fear; let these two go hand in hand, your fear and your hope, your confidence and your insecurity. . . . Hope for mercy while you fear justice; be encouraged by the hope of pardon while you are afflicted by the thought of the fear of hell.

### 4. *Your treatment of your brother:*

Be patient, meek, affable and modest. Make an effort to cultivate these virtues and pay no heed to the offences you have received. . . . Be lifted up and do not pay any attention to the scorn cast upon you; destroy the errors of your detractors with dissimulation and thus you will overcome the offences of your enemies who put you to shame. Against their darts you have the shield of your patience; toleration will overcome harsh words and this shield of patience will be your protection against the sword of the tongue. . . .

### 5. *Be tolerant:*

Learn from Christ modesty and tolerance; listen to him with care, and injuries will not harm you. . . . In suffering for us, he gave us an example; bruised by the blows he received, mocked by the spittle; pierced by the nails, crowned with thorns, condemned to the cross—he remained silent. It is a great virtue not to offend him by whom you are offended; great strength of character is it if, when offended, you know how to pardon. Great glory for you if you do a favour for the man who does you harm. If you are insulted, it has come to you for sins; if you are the subject of calumny, it is because of your own evil ways that it has happened to you. Believe that all the evils which come upon you are the result of your sins.

Temper your sorrow then, with the thought of that justice of which you are the victim. . . . When things go against you, pray; when



they curse you, bless him who does it; temper the violence of those who are your enemies with the sweetness of your patience; bear with a tranquil spirit the offences committed against you.

6. *Be reconciled with your brother:*

Give your brother satisfaction if he has offended you in anything; repent in his presence if you have offended him.

Do not sleep if you have not been reconciled to your brother; call him quickly and do it now; make him come to terms with you in all humility; if need be, prostrate yourself before him in submission and with a suppliant heart ask his pardon. . . .

Give your pardon to one who asks it of you; embrace with sincerity anyone who seeks your forgiveness. Do not act towards such a one according to his guilt, knowing that there will also one day be a judgement against you, and then there will be no mercy for you if you have not granted it yourself. . . . And even if he does not ask pardon, even if he does not undergo the humiliation of pleading for forgiveness, if he does not admit his crime in bad conscience, still you must give way, forgive in a good heart, be gracious, indulgent; pardon of your own free will.

## SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

### I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(We shall give a summary of his teaching concerning sin, taken from various parts of the *Summa*. It would take too long to quote him in full.)

1. *Sin, an offence against God:*

To be an offence it must be against some law, divine or natural law. Therefore St Augustine defines it as: A saying, act or desire against the divine law. It must also be a free act, which is not ordered to the law of God.

2. *It separates a man from his last end:*

St Thomas explains in many places how sin separates a man from his last end, following St Augustine, who defines sin as following temporal things, while despising eternal.

The sinner cannot harm God, yet he acts against God for two reasons: he despises God's commandments; he does evil to himself or to another by his sin, because in both cases he acts against one who is under divine providence.

3. *Infinite in a certain sense:*

Because God is infinite, against whom the offence is committed. That is why the reparation had to be infinite and had to be done by



a God made man. Sin implies separating oneself from the natural order of things. It turns man into a beast; it carries with it a threefold penalty; that of the stain of sin, that of the corruption of natural good, and that of the punishment due to sin.

4. *Man can get good out of his sins:*

In some cases because a man rises up with more humility after sin; in others because those who see the sinner go from bad to worse are frightened and avoid sin because of it.

5. *Three kinds of sin:*

Sin is a disordered act, and in man there is a threefold order, in relation to God, to himself and to his neighbour. Now there is a threefold order which we must observe:

- (a) that of the reason;
- (b) that of the divine law';
- (c) that which regulates our actions in so far as they affect others.

6. *Sins of the heart, tongue and act:*

Every sin is born in the heart, is expressed in words and then in act. Sins are divided into three kinds, sins of the heart, the mouth, and action—not as into three species, because the consummation of sin is in action, for which reason the sin of action is a complete species, but the beginning of it is in the heart. . . .

7. *Carnal and spiritual sins:*

Sins take their species from their object; but they all have one thing in common, the desire for some temporal good which is sought in a disorderly fashion . . . but there are two kinds of delectation, one animal . . . which can also be called spiritual, as when one delights in human praise; the other is carnal, which is completed by carnal contact. Those sins which end in spiritual delectation are called spiritual, while those which end in carnal are given that name, like gluttony.

## II. PAUL GALTIER, S.J.

(A summary of his teaching on the general notion of repentance. *De Paenitentia, Tractatus historico-dogmaticus*, Paris, 1931.)

1. *Catholic notion of repentance:*

The Council of Trent, in defining what is meant by penance, says that it is a movement against sin by means of hatred and detestation; it includes ceasing from sin and also hating it, that is a contrite and humble heart. Its first act is sorrow and detestation of sin committed, with a resolution not to sin again. From this we can conclude:

- (a) That repentance is not an involuntary movement, as it were a psychological state of depression following on the act of sin, but a

completely free movement, in which the will decides to repair the damage done by sin as far as possible.

(b) The object of this sorrow is personal sin, committed by the guilty person, not the consequent state of condemnation and deprivation of grace. It is necessary to be sorry for the very act of sin in so far as it is an offence against God. Fear of punishment never goes beyond being a means which can provoke this hatred for sin, but in itself it is not repentance nor has it any moral value if the penitent stops there.

(c) Consequently, penance prescind from the perfection of the motive, which may be that of fear or the noblest of all, that of love.

(d) Since we are in the supernatural order, penance must come from faith in God, -which moves us, and also be accompanied by hope of obtaining pardon.

(e) Therefore penance, in the Catholic sense, is not pure fear, even though this may be the initial motive, from which one passes to the detestation of sin and also to hope. What is more, it can go hand in hand with joy at being pardoned, in the case of the sinner who weeps for his sin and rejoices in the fact of his tears.

It is not depressive, and any excess of sensibility should be suppressed, because that can lead to despair . . . Penance is in the will, and brings with it a consolation which does not remove all sadness, but which certainly moderates it.

## 2. *The need for penance:*

### The Scriptures:

God, in both the Old and New Testaments, does not promise pardon except on the condition of repentance, which he demands, not in view of any special circumstances, but as necessary for pardon.

i. *the psalms*. The psalmist says: Bowed down day and night by thy chastisement, still my strength ebbed faint as in mid-summer heat. At last I made my transgression known to thee, and hid my sin no longer; Fault of mine, I said, I here confess to the Lord; and with that, thou didst remit the guilt of my sin. Let every devout soul, then, turn to thee in prayer when hard times befall; rise the flood never so high, they shall have no power to reach it (Ps. 31. 4-7). The whole of the psalm *Miserere* is a song of hope of being pardoned because of repentance.

ii. *the prophets*. Jeremias announced that God rejoiced at the repentance of Ephraem and could not but pardon because of it. The classical quotations are in Ezechiel 18. 21-22, 27-28; 33. 8. In the first two he declares that the divine pardon will be with the sinner as soon as his eyes are opened and he withdraws from his evil ways. What pleasure shall I find in the death of a sinner, the Lord God says, when he might have turned back from his evil ways and found life instead? In chapter 33 he goes further,

warning the preacher that, if despite the latter's efforts the sinner refuses to repent, then he will be condemned, but the preacher shall live. On the contrary: Sinner, if I threaten with death, and warning thou give him none to leave off his sinning, die he shall, as he deserves to die, but thou for his death shalt answer to me.

iii. *the New Testament*. St John the Baptist preaches the doctrine that it is not enough to receive his baptism to flee from the wrath to come; there must also be works worthy of penance. The same doctrine is preached by Peter to the Jews who asked him how they could attain forgiveness for the sin of the crucifixion (Acts 2. 38 and 3. 19). He says the same to Simon Magus (8. 22). He preached constantly this idea of works worthy of penance (Acts 26. 18-22).

iv. *other passages*. Without pushing the matter any further, these texts would be enough to make us aware of the fact that the Scriptures speak of a penance which includes detestation of sin and not a mere change in the way of life, as in the case of a man who was rich and renounces his wealth, but without being sorry for having it. Anyone who weeps for the past and changes his way of life because it was formerly unjust, shows his detestation of it. But we could still quote other passages in which this hatred of sin appears explicitly; like those in the psalms when the sacred writer says: I have sinned! The three youths in the furnace admit the just punishment of Juda for his crimes, but hope for forgiveness, not merely because of a change in the Jewish customs and way of life, but also because of their contrite and humble heart (Dan. 3. 38-40. Cf. Baruch 2. 11-13).

### 3. *The penitential discipline:*

#### Theological reasons:

i. *restoring the moral order*. Man, on separating himself from God to direct his attention to a creature, offended the supreme majesty' of God, a personal offence which has to be repaired if the moral order is to be restored. It is a rule that offences are paid for by repentance for having committed them and a plea for pardon.

ii. *the need to attain our last end by our own acts*. God wishes us to attain our last end, not merely through grace, but also by our own acts. Sacred Scripture and natural reason exact the same thing. Now, a man who, by his voluntary act, has put himself far from the road to salvation cannot co-operate with grace in any other way except by removing the obstacle which is stopping him from receiving grace, namely sin and his affection for it.

### 4. *Consequences of this doctrine:*

This way of attaining justification is a greater work than that of pardoning without any demand on the individual, because the



greatest act of mercy is to do good to those who have offended. God, in granting his grace to man so that he may repent, and then helping him in the very act of his sorrow so as to change him into a friend, is doing him a great favour, changing his evil will into a good will.

Repentance must cover all sins, because it is enough if there is one not repented for, to leave man in the state of an enemy of God and the moral order is still unrepaired and man is still turned away from his last end.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

*i. Siti:*

O Christians, Christians! Think of the brotherhood which you share with this great God. Learn to know him, and despise him not; for, if his gaze is pleasant to those who love him, it is terrible and awful in its fury to those who persecute him. Oh, why can we not realize that sin is a pitched battle fought against God with all our senses and the faculties of our soul; the stronger the soul is, the more ways it invents to betray its King. Thou knowest, my Lord, that often I was more terrified at thinking that I might see thy Divine Face turned from me in wrath on that fearful day of the last Judgement than of all the pains and fury of hell that I could imagine, and that I begged thee, by thy mercy, to save me from a thing so grievous. And this I still beg of thee, Lord. What could happen to me on earth comparable to this? I will accept it all, my God, but deliver me from so great an affliction; may I never forsake my God or lose the peaceful fruition of such great beauty. . . .

Let us brace ourselves anew, for you know how his Majesty says that, if we repent at having offended him, he will not remember our faults and our evil deeds (*Exclamations*, XIV).

O God of my soul, how quick we are to offend thee! Tet how much quicker art thou to forgive us! What reason is there, Lord, for such foolish presumption on our part? Is it that, having learned the greatness of thy mercy, we forget how righteous is thy justice? The sorrows of death compassed me. Alas, Alas! How grave a thing is sin, which sufficed to slay God himself and to cause him such anguish! And even now, my God, thou art beset by this same anguish. Whither canst thou go where they will not torment thee? Everywhere mortals are wounding thee.

O Christians, it is time to defend your King and to stand by him in his great loneliness. For very few of his liegemen have remained faithful to him, whereas following Lucifer there is a great multitude.

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And what is worse, they declare themselves his friends in public, yet secretly betray him: there is scarcely one whom he can trust. O true Friend, how ill art thou recompensed by him who betrays thee! O true Christians! Stand by your God as he weeps, for those tears of compassion were not shed for Lazarus only but for others who would never rise from the dead, even though his Majesty were to cry to them with a loud voice. O my God, all the faults I have committed against thee were then before thy eyes. May there be no more of them, Lord, may there be no more either of them or of the faults of others. Raise up those dead souls; and may thy voice, Lord, be so powerful as to give them life, even though they ask it not of thee, and then, my God, they will come forth, even from the depths of their pleasures (*ibid.* X).

Oh, my God, what great blindness! Oh, what great ingratitude, my King! Oh, what incurable madness, my God, that we should use what thou hast given us for serving the devil! That we should requite the great love which thou hast towards us by loving one who hates thee so and will hate thee for ever! Despite the blood which thou didst shed for us and the scourgings and grievous pains which thou didst suffer and the cruel torments which thou didst endure, we, instead of avenging thine eternal Father (though thou desirest not vengeance and didst pardon all the sacrilege and violence committed against thy Son), take those who treated him in this way as our companions and friends. Since we follow their infernal leader, we shall clearly all become one with him and live for ever in his sight and company, unless thy mercy heals us by restoring us to our right minds and forgiving us the past. . . .

O my God, how dost thou suffer for one who grieves so little for thy sorrows! The time will come, Lord, when thy justice will be made clear to all, and it will be seen to be equal to thy mercy. See, Christians, let us consider this well, for we shall never be able to understand the full extent of what we owe to our Lord God, and the exceeding greatness of his mercies. But also, if his justice is equally great, what will happen to those who have merited its execution and manifestation in themselves?

It is very important, sisters, that we should not think of the soul as something dark. It must seem dark to most of us, because we cannot see it, for we forget that there is not only a light which we can see, but also an interior light, and so we think that within our soul there is some kind of darkness. Of the soul that is not in grace, I grant you, that is true—not, however, from any defect in the Sun of Justice, who is within it and is giving it being, but because this soul is not capable of receiving that light. A certain person came to see that these unhappy souls are, as it were, in a dark prison, with their feet and hands bound so that they can do no good thing which will help them to win merit; they are both blind and dumb°We do

well to take pity on them, realizing that there was a time when we were ourselves like them and that the Lord may have mercy on them also.

Let us take special care, sisters, to pray for them to him, and not be negligent. To pray for those who are in mortal sin is the best kind of almsgiving—a much better thing than it would be to loose a Christian whom we saw with his hands tied behind him, bound with a stout chain, made fast to a post and dying of hunger, not for lack of food, because he has beside him the most delicious things to eat, but because he cannot take them and put them into his mouth although he is weary to death and actually knows that he is on the point of dying, and not merely a death of the body, but one which is eternal. Would it not be extremely cruel to stand looking at such a man and not give him this food to eat? And supposing you could loose his chains by means of your prayers? You see now what I mean. For the love of God, I beg you to remember such souls when you pray (*hit. Castle*, VII. i).

Before passing on I want you to consider what will be the state of this castle, so beautiful and resplendent, this Orient pearl, this tree of life, planted in the living waters of life—namely, in God—when the soul falls into mortal sin. No thicker blackness exists, and there is nothing dark and black which is not much less so than this. You need know only one thing about it—that although the Sun himself, who has given it all its splendour and beauty, is still there at the centre of the soul, it is as if he were not there for any participation which the soul has in him, though it is as capable of enjoying him as is the crystal of reflecting the sun. While in a state like this the soul will find profit in no other; and hence, being as it is in mortal sin, none of the good works it may do will be of any avail to win it glory; for they will not have their origin in the First Principle which is God, through whom alone our virtue is true virtue. And, since this soul has separated itself from him, it cannot be pleasing in his eyes; for after all, the intention of a person who commits mortal sin is not to please him but to give pleasure to the devil; and as the devil is darkness itself, the poor soul becomes darkness itself likewise.

I know of a person to whom the Lord wished to show what a soul was like when it committed a mortal sin. That person says that, if people could understand this, she thinks they would find it impossible to sin at all, and, rather than meet occasions of sin would put themselves to the greatest trouble imaginable. . . .

O souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Clirist! Learn to understand yourselves and take pity on yourselves! Surely, if you understand your own natures, it is impossible that you will not strive to remove the pitch which blackens the crystal? Remember, if your life were to end now, you would never enjoy this light again. O Jesus, how sad it is to see a soul deprived of it! What a state the poor



rooms of the castle are in! How distracted are the senses which inhabit them! And the faculties which are their governors, butlers and stewards—how blind they are and how ill-controlled! And yet, after all, what kind of fruit can one expect to be borne by a tree rooted in the devil.

## 2. *Pardon* :

Notice, sisters, that he does not say: ‘as we shall forgive’. We are to understand that anyone who asks for so great a gift as that just mentioned, and has already yielded his own will to the will of God, must have done this already. And so he says: ‘as we forgive our debtors.’ Anyone, then, who sincerely repeats this petition, *Fiat ■voluntas tua*, must, at least in intention, have done this already. You see now why the saints rejoiced in insults and persecutions; it was because these gave them something to present to the Lord when they prayed to him. What can a poor creature like myself do, who has had so little to forgive others and has so much to be forgiven herself. This, sisters, is something which we should consider carefully; it is such a serious and important matter that God should pardon us our sins, which have merited eternal fire, that we must pardon all trifling things which have been done to us and which are not wrongs at all, or anything else. For how is it possible, either in word or in deed, to wrong one who, like myself, has deserved to be plagued by devils for ever? As I have so few, Lord, even of these trifling things, to offer thee, thy pardoning of me must be a free gift; there is abundant scope here for thy mercy. Thy Son must pardon me, for no one has done me any injustice, and so there has been nothing that I can pardon for thy sake. But take my desire to do so, Lord, for I believe I would forgive any wrong if thou wouldst forgive me and I might unconditionally do thy will. True, if the occasion were to arise and I were condemned without cause, I do not know what I should do. But at this moment I see that I am so guilty in thy sight that everything I might have to suffer would fall short of my deserts, though anyone not knowing, as thou knowest, what I am, would think I was being wronged. . . .

How greatly the Lord must esteem this mutual love of ours one for another! For having given him our wills, we have given him complete rights over us, and we cannot do that without love. See, then, sisters, how important it is for us to love one another and to be at peace. The good Jesus might have put everything else before our love one for another, and said: Forgive us, Lord, because we are doing a great deal of penance, or because we are praying often, and fasting, and because we have left all for thy sake and love thee greatly. But he has never said: Because we would lose our lives for thy sake, or any of these other things which he might have said. He simply says: Because we forgive (*Way of Perfection*, chap. 36).

## II. P. E. NIEREMBERG

(Summary of his doctrine with regard to divine mercy. Cf. *De la hermosura de Dios y de su amabilidad*. Madrid, 1905.)

### Grades of God's mercy

God's favour shows up most clearly in the works of his mercy. It shows itself infinite in the way it brought us out of nothing; lifted us up to the level of the supernatural; but especially in the manner of our redemption. A Lord who needs nothing and who could, in an instant, create an infinite number of most saintly men, dies for Adam, the traitor.

#### 1. *Great in itself:*

God sends his Son in our flesh that he might die . . . It would not have been greater mercy to pardon us freely, because in this way his justice also is served. Great too, since it has lifted up a man to the very throne of God, so that he might be adored. There is nothing about which Kings are more jealous than their sceptre, and here is God sharing his with a man.

#### 2. *In its effects:*

Because:

##### (a) It freed us from sin, the supreme evil:

This, because of its infinite malice, cannot be redeemed by man, by the ordinary laws, and means the irreparable death of the soul. The redemption made a simple thing out of a most difficult one—that of getting rid of sin.

##### (b) It freed us from hell:

If freedom from a prison in which we may have to stay without sight of the sun for twenty years is a great benefit, what will it not be to free us from the horrible prison of hell, region of darkness and torments eternal?

##### (c) It taught us admirable doctrines, and divine secrets:

Together with the wonderful example of Christ—thus making virtue easier for us. This is one of the important fruits of the Incarnation.

##### (d) He restored us to his friendship, apart from pardoning us our faults:

Incomparable benefits, both from the point of view of the sad state from which we were saved and also the high dignity to which we are lifted up. See the extremes and think of the infinite distance between fallen nature and innocence, from this to the angelic nature, and from this to sons of God. Yet Christ carried us across this gap in one instant.

(e) He gave us the infinite treasures of his merits:

By these we are forgiven, not once only, but as many times as we may have sinned. What prince has ever done that with one guilty of an insult against his majesty several times ? We might add that this benefit is attained by a simple act of the will, a moment of contrition. Christ could have laid down difficult conditions; he chose simple ceremonies, like the sacraments.

(f) The mercy of the redemption was great because God shows forth in it his other great attributes which accompany it:

There was never a greater show of divine justice, which gave God's Son to pay for the sins of men. Nor greater omnipotence and wisdom, which knew well how to bring about this harmony of justice and mercy. . . .

3. *What we owe God:*

What do we owe to God for all these benefits, especially when we did not merit them; on the contrary, we deserved to be destroyed as traitors ? When we think that he did it himself, why are we not astounded ? How is it that we do not give you full love and gratitude ? We might go on to remember that not merely did he do it himself, immediately, but it cost him such great humiliations, shedding of blood and death itself. . . . That a God should wish to be scourged, wounded and killed, so that man might escape torments; that he should wish to die on a cross so that man might not die—surely no greater love than this can be imagined! Great God, great Lover of souls ! How well you have shewn us that you love us, in the greatness of your sufferings for us. What is that breast, pierced by the lance, those nailed feet and hands, but so many mouths, swearing with an oath that you love me. That face, bruised and wet with the spittle, what is it but another testimony to your love? Those shoulders, covered with wounds, what are they but another clear proof that you love me; and that head, torn with the sharp thorns, is it not just an evident argument for your love for me ? I do believe, Lord ; I believe that you love me !

HL BOURDALOUE

Pardon of injuries

(A Summary of the argument of this famous discourse, with its main divisions.)

i. There was never a reproach more just than the one contained in this parable and never a clearer threat: as you act, so will your heavenly Father act towards you.



(a) God has the right to demand that we forgive others.

(b) If we refuse, then he has one more reason for not pardoning us. Do you wish to dispute God's right? Do you wish that he should break it in pardoning you?

2. *The divine precept:*

(a) It is the Lord who imposes pardon:

Both in the natural religion and in the divine positive law. The tradition which commanded the Jews to love their friends and hate their enemies was not God's command, nor Christ's. I say to you, love your enemies. Once we suppose the existence of this precept it is easy to see the reason for it; he is the Lord, to whom we owe obedience and homage. Do not say that it is a sacrifice which costs you dear, because we have to sacrifice everything to God. Is that impossible, says St Jerome, which depends on your own will? There is no valid excuse when the Lord tells us: I say to you, love your enemies.

(b) The Father asks for pardon:

God does not want a dry obedience where this law is concerned; he wishes gratitude to play its part; therefore he imposes it on us as our benefactor and our Father. He says to us: It is for my sake that you are forgiving; I do not ask you to pardon your enemy because he merits it; forgive him because I have merited it. It was the argument of the sons of Jacob when they directed their plea to Joseph in the name of their father (Gen. 50. 16-17).

Think, O Christian, that it is not a question of an earthly father, but of a heavenly one. How many times you will have said, with David: What shall I return to the Lord for all that he has given me? There is no need for much searching; just pardon your enemies.

(c) God's example:

It is no good our joining in an argument with God, because there is no reply to his in today's Gospel; I forgave you all your debt; should you not also have forgiven your fellow-servant? We should consider the circumstances, compare the number of offences, gravity and so so. Someone has done me an injury? And is not God insulted every day? They have offended me, a mere man; thousands offend God every day. They have done evil against me? And against God evil has been done from the creation of the world. . . . Our misfortune is to have tried, by original sin, to become like God, and now we refuse that likeness. Then we tried to be like him in what is exclusive to him, the fact of being the Supreme Lord of all things; now we should try to imitate him in his virtues, especially his patience, his mercy, his charity; thus putting into practice that phrase: Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

## (d) The judge demands it:

If I have not yet moved you to pardon, I will put before you one more argument. Christ is our judge, and we know that we have sinned; we do not know if he has pardoned us, but we do know that he will, provided we pardon. Do not be deceived; the Lord says: Forgive and you will be forgiven (Luke 6. 37), and in those few words he laid the foundation of our hope and at the same time of our fear, if we should refuse pardon.

See that he did not say I will pardon you a certain kind of fault, or a certain number of sins after a certain time when you have made satisfaction to my justice. The supreme Judge puts only one condition; pardon and you can at once ascend to my altar clean, to present yourselves before my infinite majesty.

3. *Our pardon and that of our neighbour:*

What would be difficult for us would be if we were treated as we treat others, or if we were judged as we judge others; such is our injustice that if we were judged as we judge others, then there would be nothing but complaints against us. . . . Why should we not have reason to fear that God will observe with us the same measure as we use towards others? We are not satisfied with God's way of acting and we want him to conform to ours, because we make ourselves guilty before God by neglecting his essential commands. We sin against Christ, by refusing to act as Christians should; against our neighbour, who is in the person of Christ with us, condemning ourselves by the very words of the Our Father which we recite every day.

These are the four titles by which God will refuse to pardon me unless I forgive my neighbour.

## (a) Guilty before God:

The precept exists and it is a serious one, as we have seen, and do not think that it is an indifferent thing whether we forgive or **not**. . . no matter how much you may strike your breasts or pray, it will still be true that judgement without mercy will be the lot of him who does not have mercy on others (James 2. 13).

## (b) Christ denied:

The first characteristic of the law of the Gospel is charity, which makes no distinction between friends and enemies, but which unites all hearts and makes us pray for those who hate us or persecute or injure us. A charity which our Lord practised on the Cross to perfection and in which consists the very perfection of the law, a thing which he loved so much that he said: By this shall all men know that you are my disciples. He who hates his neighbour breaks this law and at the same time breaks with Christ, if not in words, at least in works. He does not perform one of the most important precepts of the law of Christ. And if we break with Christ, whom shall we use as a mediator, to whom shall we go?

(c) Guilty against our neighbour:

In so far as he stands in the place of Christ, God has wished that the neighbour should have vested in him all the divine rights. Christ may well say to us, If you have anything against your neighbour put it to my account and see if I have not already paid enough for you to pardon him.

4. *Conclusion:*

We have it in our hands to decree our own sentence when we come to be judged, since even in our prayer we say: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.

## SECTION VI. LITERARY NOTE

### Mercy, the virtue of princes

There is nothing which makes man more like God, as Cicero says, than mercy, giving life to men who desire death; nor is there anything which makes men themselves more captive in chains of love, respect, and shame than when their prince, being in his rights to punish them, sets them free, and gives them life. It is not only the pardoned who are thus obliged to love and serve the prince who gives them life, but the whole nation loves, admires and praises that clemency. . . . Since a kingdom implies a rule over free men and the service of the king is a noble sendee, noble hearts win more by this suave, gentle manner and kings themselves are established firmly by it. . . .

It is quite true that princes must be careful which crimes they pardon and to whom they extend it and how; because since both pardon and punishment must have as their end the good of the State, both must be ruled by that end, punishing when it is for the good of the State, pardoning for the same reason. On this point Seneca says that it is equally cruel to pardon all as it is to punish all. . . (P. de Ribadeneira, *Tratado del Principe Cristiano*, II. 18).

## SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### A: Three lessons from today's liturgy

##### I. *Three lessons: each distinct yet related:*

Imagine a picture in three stages, in the centre Christ, the judge; on the right hand patience in trials; on the left the fight against temptations.



2. *Christy the judge:*

(a) That is how today's Gospel presents him to us; that is how the Christians of the golden age saw him when they sang the Introit in procession: All things are governed by thy will, O Lord, and there is none can resist thy power. It is as judge that we are going to present him in this picture.

(b) He shows us two aspects ;

i. *a severe inflexible judge*, using the rigours of his justice, exacting even the last farthing;

ii. *as a merciful judge*, desiring to forgive and longing for our reconciliation.

(c) It depends on us whether he uses justice or mercy:

He demands one condition; Forgive. If we forgive, we shall receive pardon from a merciful judge. Pardon is an aspect of charity; and the Church reminds us of it today. We are on our way towards the Gospel of the last judgement which will be read within four weeks. It is almost as though the Church would say to us: If you want a merciful judgement, forgive, because he shall be judged without mercy who has not used mercy.

3. *Patience in trials:*

(a) The second lesson is given us in the Offertory. Job suffering and lamenting.

(b) Who is there who does not suffer in this life ?... Physical or moral sufferings; personal misfortunes, those of the family, friends, economic ... ?

(c) Whatever they may be, they all come to us from the hand of a merciful judge, as trials :

i. some are punishments for sins;

ii. others means for increasing virtue.

(d) In all cases they are warnings to call us back to the true path of justice, so that we may avoid the severe whip of divine justice one day, later.

4. *The fight against temptations:*

(a) The lesson in the Epistle:

Life is a battle, not against flesh and blood, but against the ambushes of Satan. The wicked angels who brought sin into the world are always trying to stain with it the souls of all those whom God has created to know and love him. At one time we all groaned beneath the captivity of Satan.

(b) Christ freed us from this; but Satan continues to fight against mankind :

This is temptation. It excites our concupiscence, drags the will with it and gives birth to sin.

(c) We must be warned against our enemy:

That is why St Paul tells us to take up the arms provided by God (Eph. 6. 13-17).

5. *Flee from sin:*

(a) Here are the three lessons, and it might appear that there is little connection between them; but there is. They all converge on the flight from sin; the thought of the severe judge who will punish sin, etc.

(b) The trials he may send us in this life are all motives for putting on the breastplate of justice, which will keep us in the grace and favour of God and temper his justice with mercy.

## B: The leaders of the world of darkness

1. *The devil's titles:*

(a) St Paul calls him the god of this world (2 Cor. 4. 4);

(b) the Lord said that he was the prince of this world (John 14. 30);

(c) in what does this kingdom consist and what are its titles?

2. *The titles of the kingdom of Satan:*

The power of the devil over this world is due to three things; there is a connection between them: (a) his ambition and envy, which move him to conquer it; (b) divine permission; (c) choice and submission of the world.

(a) The ambition and envy of the devil:

i. *the most perfect of all God's creatures fell through a sin of pride:* thus he changed himself into an abject creature, hardened in evil, because *corruptio optimi pessima*. That pride which moved him to sin continues to be his companion and his punishment.

ii. *his very corruption and hardness of will lead him to hate good wherever he sees it,* especially divine good, which he sees reflected in the grace of so many souls. He longs for them to fall from grace.

iii. *there remains the spirit of pride.* This leads him, since he cannot escape now from the hands of his superior, God, to subject to himself those who are his inferiors, men. That is why he makes such a great effort to get us to submit to his laws and his caprices. It is one of the explanations for diabolic possession.

iv. *but the devil is also full of envy.* He suffers when he sees the good of men, because he sees that they, on attaining a happiness of which he has been deprived, take their places above him. In his envy he tries to get them to lose that good which his envy sees to be bad for his pride.

v. *in his pride,* since he cannot be like God in creating new beings, he tries to adulterate God's works, in imitation of him. He tries to make men turn all creation to an unnatural use.

vi. *in his desire to be like God he tries to make us worship him—* devil worship is a fact of history which cannot be denied, and exists today. Diabolic possession is another attempt at dominion over men.

(b) Divine permission:

i. the devil's desires would not have been of any use to him without the divine permission ;

ii. God governs the world through his providence, using the good angels to separate us from evil and lead us to good ;

iii. but the perfection of man's virtue also requires the indirect means of temptation to try it and harden it in the fire; for this he has made use of the devil, whom he permits to tempt us, but never beyond our powers. See how God, who will not allow any of his creatures to be free from his service, puts the devil to work in the divine plan for our salvation.

(c) The world's choice :

i. in spite of all our weakness, which he knows only too well, and in spite of his own intelligence, cleverness and sinful will, the devil would never have been able to enslave us had it not been the free choice of the world. The world chose him for its king.

ii. *it is useless to insist.* In the struggle between the world and God, the devil rules over the world. The world has accepted him voluntarily and in punishment God gives him special power over the sinner.

3. *In what does his kingdom consist:*

(a) As Lord of the world, it is he who directs it towards its end, which is the mission of rulers. Now, the end or purpose the devil has in mind is the separation of man from God, an end which he desires under the appearances of liberty. It is the "I will not serve". All those who are driven to this end by sin fall under the rule of Satan, who becomes their head.

(b) In the world he is like the ruler who raises his standard and the soldiers follow him, sometimes even without thinking which captain it is they are serving.

4. *His weakness:*

(a) It is true that our struggle is against forces far superior to our own strength, but we should not be discouraged, because God has those forces bound. The devil is strong because we help him; he is strong against those who do not watch, who close their ears to God's warnings. . . .

(b) But he is very weak against those who submit themselves to God and show him a brave front.

i. he who wants to put the mark of the beast on the foreheads of all men, flees from the sign of the cross ;



ii. he is like a chained dog, who cannot bite those who do not approach too close to him;

iii. prayer is one of the main weapons to change this roaring lion into the primitive serpent, who creeps away;

iv. God is faithful, who will not let us be tempted beyond our powers (1 Cor. 10. 13). The devil is a coward who trembles at the very name of God (James 2. 19). Take up God's weapons then, and do not fear.

## C: God's weapons. Truth

### i. *The arms of truth:*

(a) Weapons reflect the tactics and mentality of leaders. Thus there are nations which are chiefly maritime powers, others strong in their air power, etc.

(b) The devil is one who, according to Christ, did not maintain himself in truth (John 8. 44), the father of lies. Christ is he who is full of grace and truth (John 1. 14).

(c) Is it strange then, that while the devil attacks with lies and error, the Christian must defend himself with truth ?

### 2. *What is truth?*

We may ask this question, not as did Pilate, but in all sincerity, as those who see that in this weapon lies their best defence.

#### (a) Its definition:

i. under one aspect it implies that the mind sees things as they really are;

ii. under another aspect, things themselves are true when they fulfil the purpose for which they were made by their creator. The world is true in this sense, because it fulfils the purpose in God's mind when he made it.

#### (b) The weapons of truth:

i. it is clear from the definition we have given that the weapons of truth will be, on the one hand, a knowledge of the real truth about God, ourselves and the world. Thus, when the devil tries to present other ideas to us under the form of: You will be like Gods ; we shall be able to reply: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore. When he presents us a God who forgets us and is careless about us, we shall challenge him with today's Gospel. When he shows us the world and pleasure as an end to be sought, we shall know the truth, seeing that all these things are directed towards God. The truth of the Gospel will then have remained in us (Gal. 2. 5).

ii. but we must also be true under the other aspect of the definition. We must fulfil the role given to us by God when he made us; our actions must conform to this standard, otherwise we are not living the truth. We are living a lie (2 Cor. 11. 10).

iii. and what actions are these? The commandments are the centre ; together with them go the evangelical counsels and virtues, without any lies, sincerely, not accompanied by vanity, hypocrisy . . . and with this, each one's special vocation.

(c) he who keeps the commandments, practises virtue and lives according to his vocation has fulfilled God's idea and lives in truth.

## II. THE GOSPEL

### A: The evil of sin: against God

#### Sin in itself

Sin makes us God's debtor in a special way. Its main evil is that it is an offence against God.

#### Sin, an offence against God

##### 1. *Definition:*

Classical, that of Augustine: any word, deed or thought against the eternal law. St Thomas defines it simply as a bad human act, that is, a voluntary act which is against the law of God. The catechism, simply: Any thought, word or deed against the law of God. From these there are two important conclusions.

(a) The sinner infringes the law established by God, because that law is ruled by the eternal law.

(b) Sin turns against God himself, since the law of God is only a reflection of God's supreme being, infinitely holy. He who sins, rebels against God.

##### 2. *Against God, the creator:*

(a) Grave malice this; a rebellion of the creature against his creator; man, who has received all things, against him who gave all things.

(b) When have we ever seen a beggar turn against the generous donor who gave him an alms ? Evil indeed would be the one who did such a thing.

(c) We are all beggars in the sight of God :

- i. our body and soul are his alms;
- ii. our senses and our powers too;
- iii. our intellect, will, hands and feet;
- iv. our life—and when we sin we turn against him those very things w'hich he has given us so freely.

##### 3. *Against God who keeps us in being:*

(a) The creature abuses God's natural help in all our actions to sin against him.

(b) Man is always nothing, God is everything in man; if he withdrew his help for one moment we would fall into nothing; from love he made us, from love he assists us in all that we do.

(c) This complete dependence in being and action should make us submit ourselves to God in all things. In spite of it all, man sins, tries to separate himself from God, cast him out of his life.

4. *Against God, our Father:*

(a) So far, we have thought of sin as the offence of the servant against his master; but that servant was raised to the dignity of a son. He has a most intimate union with God, shares in his life. Greater then should be his thanks and his love for God. If against this duty he sins, then the malice of that sin is greater too.

(b) The disobedience of a son is not only more grave than that of a servant; it is of a different kind. We might say that its depth is as impossible to sound as is the depth of God's goodness in making us his sons.

(c) Sin attacks the very intimate work of God in his creatures; it attacks grace itself, that share in the divine life and in the divine mysteries. It would be difficult indeed to plumb the malice of sin.

## Profanation of God

It is easy to see from what has already been said. Baltassar profaned the sacred vessels of the Temple and the result was the writing on the wall (Dan. 5. 1-24).

## There is a special gravity in sin

1. *It is one which is almost infinite:*

Because it is directed against an infinite being—and an offence is measured by the dignity of the person offended.

2. *That is why the Incarnation was needed to give God complete satisfaction:*

Only the infinite activity of the Word of God made Flesh could satisfy for this malice in man's sin. Thus Christ will always be the most eloquent testimony to the evil of sin.

3. *The soul in sin:*

(a) Have mercy on me, O God (Ps. 50. 3). I know, Lord, that I have sinned against thee and only against thee.

(b) Now I know the malice of my sin—I know my iniquities. I know now that my sins have left on my soul an imprint of malice, of separation, of enmity, of reprobation. My sin is always before me.

(c) Have mercy on me, O Lord, your mercy is greater than the number and malice of my sins; look only at the bleeding face of your Son, who to redeem us became man and died for us. Now, while there is still time, finish in me the work of your mercy. Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to thy great mercy. And in future never allow me to separate myself from thee.



## B: Effects of sin in the one who commits it

### 1. *The mystery of sin:*

(a) It contradicts the moral order established by God; also the natural order. That is why it is such a mystery, and possibly only in the glory of heaven can man know exactly the enormous error it is to sin against God.

(b) We may see some of the evils it entails by its effects.

(c) We shall limit ourselves here to those it produces in the sinner, leaving aside those of divine punishment.

### 2. *The universal nature of sin:*

(a) We are all God's debtors, not in money, but in sins.

(b) Even the apostles were guilty of sin; Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves; it means that truth does not dwell in us (i John i. 8).

(c) Let us examine the effects our sins produce in us, so as to repent and resolve not to commit them again. No matter who commits them, their effects are always the same, but more grave according to the dignity of the person who sins.

### 3. *Sin an offence against the dignity of the person:*

(a) St Thomas, always so calm and delicate in his theological explanations, seems to forget this when he speaks of sin, because he uses expressions which are as hard as they are exact. He says: Man, through sin, falls as it were into the slavery of brute beasts . . . and he goes on: Even though to kill a man is in itself evil, still to kill a man who is a sinner could be a good action, like killing a beast, because the evil man is worse than a beast and causes harm. . . .

(b) He gives the reason later: The sinner separates himself from the order of reason and thus loses his human dignity, that is to say, the element which makes a man naturally free and self-sufficient. He is not worthy of the name of man who rebels against God.

### 4. *Sin, offence against the dignity of a son of God:*

(a) In the natural order man occupies a place which is higher than the rest of creatures; but his greatest dignity is that of being a son of God.

(b) When we speak of man's dignity the foundation of this lies in the fact that he has been raised to a supernatural order, in which he is given a share in the divine nature and life of God, as temple of the Holy Spirit and adopted son of God. He has a divine and a holy dignity, with which his human, natural dignity cannot be compared.

(c) Sin profanes and destroys this greatness; wipes it out; is morally incompatible with it; God withdraws from the soul which commits it.

5. *Sin, a stain on the soul:*

(a) That is what St Thomas calls sin; man, on sinning, contracts a stain on the soul in so far as the deformity of sin deprives him of the beauty of sanctifying grace.

(b) Sin disfigures the soul, makes it unpleasant in God's sight, and is thus a stain.

(c) But it does not merely disfigure the soul, it extinguishes and destroys that divine beauty which is possessed by the soul in grace. Through the redemption of Christ the soul has a divine beauty and splendour which has the same relation to sin as light has to darkness. Sin puts a screen up between the divine light and the soul, thus plunging it into darkness (cf. St Teresa).

6. *Sin, the death of the soul:*

(a) Grave sin is called mortal; and it is indeed, because it causes the death of the soul. Grace and sanctity form an authentic life, the very life of God shared by the soul.

(b) Sin destroys this life; it is a true spiritual suicide, more grave and terrible than that by which a man destroys his natural life, since it destroys supernatural life which is infinitely more valuable than the soul itself.

(c) In destroying this life sin often has natural consequences, too.

7. *Corruption of natural good:*

(a) It is impossible to think that sin destroys only grace, leaving nature intact. The sinner who extinguishes in himself the divine light, falls from the supernatural, lower than his own nature.

(b) Since grace is the greatest good of our nature, the sinner, on destroying that good, destroys and perverts his own nature. The will becomes hard, twisted, rebellious.

(c) Grace is not merely a fine garment covering the soul; it is a true grafting into it of the divine life; and when that graft is torn out by sin, then it will leave a wound as deep and as true as that left in a rose bush were the graft on it to be torn out. Man should meditate on these evils caused in him by sin.

8. *The sinner, object of God's anger and hatred:*

(a) A new harm done by sin; God hates and rejects the sinner in the same measure as he loved him when he drew him to grace. Only a movement of the soul towards God in sincere repentance can turn that hatred into love and mercy.

(b) Sometimes this anger and hate show themselves in the form of temporal punishments, hardening of the heart and will, etc. After death they will take the form of eternal punishment, in hell.

9. *Weep for your sin:*

(a) Meditate on the evils your sins have caused in you; do not talk about your dignity if you are in sin; you have lost it. But do not

despair; go back on your evil life and you will see that your sins are more numerous than the hairs of your head.

(b) Before men you may be thought much of and praised; but in the sight of God you are a man without dignity, because you lost it voluntarily. Take your place like that now, before Christ crucified, who died to transform our soul from the state of sin to that of grace.

(c) Weep for your sins as did Magdalen and Peter; if you have sinned much, more reason for you to be humble and admit the great loving mercy of your Redeemer.

### C: The gravity of sin judged by its punishment

#### The sins of others

1. St Ignatius, in the *Spiritual Exercises*, has a meditation which bears this title. Its object is to move us to repent through the thought that others, who have sinned less than we, have been punished by God; while we, who have sinned more deeply, are still on the road to salvation.

2. He considers three sinners, the angels, Adam and Eve, or humanity in them, and lastly the man who dies after committing one mortal sin.

3. There is another way of dealing with this theme; namely the thought of the sins of those others from the point of view of God's reaction to them, so that we can get some idea of the gravity of sin when God, who is all love and mercy, has to punish it in such a way.

#### General scheme of the meditation

There are three points, and in each the stress should be on the love of God for these creatures before sin and his anger and hatred for them afterwards. We may distinguish three parts in each point.

##### 1. *The good things received from God:*

Not merely natural but also supernatural. Both are a manifestation of God's love, which is always positive and gives good things to those he loves.

##### 2. *The sin of the creature:*

The general nature of sin is enough; there is no need to go into details. Aversion from God; conversion to creatures.

##### 3. *The punishment on the part of God:*

Eternal loss of God and also other punishments. The circumstances of the punishment should be remembered; i.e. who is punished, by whom, why, how, when?



## The sin of the angels

1. The good things received: grace, liberty; to know and love God face to face; the first-born adopted sons of God, objects of his special love; the highest of all rational creatures.
2. The sin: pride; one mortal sin.
3. Punishment: hell for all eternity; loss of God and of all that could make them happy for ever. That is how a just God punishes sin; a God who loved the angels like a true Father. Who can measure, then, the gravity of sin if this is its effect?
4. *Comparison.*
  - (a) Our sins are numerous;
  - (b) in a certain sense more grave than that of the angels, because they sinned against God, the Creator; we against God, the Redeemer;
  - (c) they did not know the love of a God who is born, suffers and dies on a Cross; they did not have time to repent; we have sinned and been pardoned many times; we should be duly ashamed and repent once more.

## The sin of Adam

1. *Good things received:*

All can be included under the one notion of original justice; grace, integrity, innocence, impassibility, immortality, infused knowledge; son of God by adoption.
2. *The sin:*

Pride and disobedience; aversion from God and conversion to creatures. It had to be a sin of the mind and will, not from concupiscence, because of the gifts he had received. One sin.
3. *Punishment:*
  - (a) Cast out of paradise; a life without original justice; work and penance all men's lives; corruption of human race through this one sin.
  - (b) If we think of the sufferings of men, wars, famines, misfortunes of all kinds, we shall be able to see just a part of the punishment of one sin.
  - (c) The same loving Father punishes at once; without time to repent Adam and Eve are cast out; a terrible punishment which, had it not been for the mysterious mercy of the redemption, would have cast us all into hell for ever.
4. *Comparison:*

Again shame and confusion at the thought that we are even more guilty than they, after having been redeemed and pardoned freely by Christ.

### He who dies with one mortal sin on his soul

In this hypothetical case we see even more clearly the malice of our sins and the punishments they deserve.

1. A man like ourselves, of the same age, created by God, redeemed by Christ, God has poured out blessings both natural and supernatural on him; a good man and a virtuous one.

#### 2. *Sin*:

He commits one mortal sin, against any of the commandments; immediately afterwards he dies. It is not difficult for that to happen. Histon' teaches us that there have been cases. Today, when accidents abound, it could happen more easily, perhaps.

#### 3. *Punishment*:

(a) Hell for all eternity', justly merited ;

(b) that is how God sees sin, a God who is loving and merciful, who has redeemed man—this man. What must the malice of sin be when it merits such a dire punishment ?

#### 4. *Comparison*:

It could happen to us, and with more reason. After our first mortal sin God could have demanded an account of us. He waited for us and he continues to wait. Why do we continue to offend him ? Let us be ashamed and repent.

### Conclusion

1. Why were others punished and I still live on ? Why am I pardoned who have offended so many times ? The answer lies in the redemption, and therefore the meditation must end at the feet of Christ crucified, with the thought of all that he did for us.

2. After looking at Christ, God made man for us, who died for us, let us look at ourselves.

(a) What have you done for Christ ?

(b) What are you doing for him now ?

(c) What must you do for him ? The first two thoughts should fill you with shame. From the third repentance is born, resolutions, generosity. What must my life be like from now on ?

### D : Our own sins

Again an Ignatian meditation, and one of his best. We must learn it well so as to be able to deliver it, in various forms, with energy and enthusiasm. It is very useful for souls.

## The three main points

### i. *Our sins:*

It is wise to present a list of the sins which good people sometimes forget or do not consider sufficiently. We shall give here a rough scheme, but it must be adjusted to the audience, of course, and to the occasion.

#### (a) Sins against charity:

Many good people sin more by omission than by action against this, the first of all the commandments. They do not perform works of mercy; they are represented in the parable of the Good Samaritan by the priest and Levite.

#### (b) Christ condemned the action of the priest and Levite: How many there are nowadays like them!

#### (c) sins of lack of confidence in God:

An anxiety for our own good which is sinful, because it is against confidence in our loving Father;

#### (d) sins against justice:

i. *not fulfilling our contracts*; in the office, the workshop, the job we have to do; *loss of time which is deliberate*; loss of materials through careless work etc.

ii. *defrauding labourers of their wages*? badly paid servants?

iii. *not paying our bills all time*? This can mean a grave loss to shopkeepers.

iv. *sins against social justice*, bad distribution of profits, etc.

#### (e) pride:

The root of all sins and present in all men. In women it takes the form of vanity.

#### (f) avarice:

The sin of our time, perhaps more than any other.

#### (g) anger:

With grave consequences in the family and in society.

#### (h) sins of the tongue:

All are guilty, some more than others, little importance placed on them.

#### (i) sins against our duty to the Church:

i. against authority of Pope, bishop, priest;

ii. the duty of the apostolate;

iii. the support of our pastors, pious causes, missions, etc.?

### 2. *Transition:*

(a) The Ignatian idea in this meditation is to make the hearers ashamed of themselves, so that they will have more trust and



confidence in the mercy of God. It is like pressure applied to a spring, so that it may jump back with greater vigour afterwards.

(b) We might recommend the reading of the 8th chapter of Paul to the Romans, especially vv. 19-23, to give more substance to this part of the meditation.

(c) To increase the sorrow and the confidence of the sinner we might lay special stress on v. 28. Meanwhile, we are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his design. Everything—St Thomas adds, even sin!

### 3. *Mercy:*

We should end with an appeal to God's mercy, which is infinite—and the whole of this second section of the meditation should be filled with this idea of God's mercy. There should also be stress on worldliness, the great enemy of our time in all fields, television, radio, novels, newspapers, etc.

### 4. *Summary:*

(a) Unlimited confidence in God and his mercy, yes, by all means; but at the same time a real effort on our part to shake off the dust of the world.

(b) Unlimited love for the Father of mercies and pardon.

(c) Hatred of sin or of its very shadow.

## E: Sins of omission

### 1. *This type of sin is very common:*

(a) We must ask God's pardon for the sins of others and for our own hidden sins. Among the latter there are those whose commission we do not even realize, so accustomed are we to them.

(b) Many, even good people, have no idea of the large debt they owe our Lord for these sins. Usually they are sins against the first commandment, against charity.

### 2. *Parable of the Good Samaritan:*

(a) The first commandment;

i. *summary of the law and the prophets:* Good master, what shall I do to possess eternal life?... This do and thou shalt live (Luke 10. 25, 28).

ii. And who is my neighbour?... a certain man... (w. 29-30). Who? of what race, nation, Jew or Gentile? Just a man—and that is enough; he is your brother, with a right to mercy and help.

(b) The sin of the priest and Levite:

Here is the typical sin of omission. They are condemned in the parable and the doctrine has been repeated many times in the Gospel.

- i. I will have mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. 12. 7).
- ii. the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16. 22-31).

3. *Parable of the talents:*

- (a) Christ praises the man who used them and condemns the lazy and slothful servant who did not (Matt. 25. 23 ff.).
- (b) Trade till I come (Luke 19. 13). We must increase the capital we have received from God.

4. *Apparent religion:*

There is an external piety which lacks charity.

- (a) This was one of the aspects of the religion of the Pharisees (Matt. 23. 23);
- (b) it is the false appearance of the fig tree which was cursed (Matt. 21. 19-22).

5. *The doctrine of the multiplication of the loaves:*

This has a hidden meaning, like all the miracles of Christ. God gives us spiritual, temporal and bodily food so that we may share it with others, after taking it ourselves.

6. *The teaching of St Paul:*

- (a) Bear the burden of one another's failings; then you will be fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2).
- (b) Do not let anybody have a claim upon you, except the claim which binds us to love one another (Rom. 13. 8).
- (c) See that all is done to your spiritual advantage (1 Cor. 14. 26).
- (d) On him all the body depends; it is organized and unified by each contact with the source which supplies it; and thus, each limb receiving the active power it needs, it achieves its natural growth, building itself up through charity (Eph. 4. 16).

7. *Practical applications:*

- (a) Pay attention to the fallen and those in need whom you may find on your path through life. Do not be egoists; communicate to others the good things you have received.
- (b) Pour them out, rather; sacrifice yourselves for others.
  - i. at home, father, mother, servants, brothers and sisters;
  - ii. with your companions;
  - iii. with all; little or much, it is always possible to do something, even in the material order.
- (c) Make good use of your intellectual and spiritual gifts. Your brother who is in need is Christ. You owe your life to Christ; to the whole Christ, physical and mystical.

8. *An account to be rendered:*

Some people will have an immense debt to pay to God for their sins of omission; and God will demand a strict account of us for them :

- (a) because they should have used their talents to help their brothers in need ;
- (b) because of the influence such sins have on the social order;
- (c) their consequences in loss of prestige for the Church and the Gospel;
- (d) their influence in the salvation of souls. Injustice leads souls to rebel against God and his teaching, sometimes to apostasy. Generous charity can reconcile them to Christ.

## F: Pardon of our enemies

### The obligation

1. An ancient fable tells the story of a father who promised his sons that he would give a most precious jewel to the one who did the greatest deed. They all came before him and told him of their progress; but one of them said that he had found an enemy lying asleep by the side of a precipice and had pardoned him. He won the prize.
2. The story is also told of St John Gualbert that he came across his brother's murderer, unarmed, and embraced him. That was also his greatest deed.
3. But why depend on these stories when we have the example of Christ. Let us explain the obligation of pardoning, under pain of sin.

### The divine precept

Without quoting many other texts we can be content with the last verse of today's Gospel.

#### 1. *The catechism of the Council of Trent sums it all up:*

It says that the greatest of all the Christian obligations is that of the pardon of wrongs done to us.

#### 2. *But there are three reasons which complete the divine precept:*

- (a) Our enemy is not always the principal cause; in the case of Job, God allowed his sufferings, in order to try him;
- (b) the desire for revenge is full of dangers and the source of many sins.
- (c) by forgiveness we are like God and can easily obtain our own pardon (Bourdaloue).

#### 3. *This pardon imposes:*

##### (a) A minimum of negative obligations:

i.e. to have no hatred in our hearts and no desire of revenge.

- i. *not to hate* means not to fan the flames of hate in our hearts nor keep there sentiments of ill-will towards others.



ii. *no revenge* means not merely not to do ill to others, but also not to refuse to give others the ordinary external manifestations of courtesy which are due to our fellow men. The circumstances will determine in each case what these are.

(b) A positive minimum of love:

All men are like ourselves and images of God. A man does not lose this because he is our enemy.

4. *This pardon does not imply:*

(a) the obligation of renouncing our rights:

Even to the point of taking our enemy to court.

(b) but with certain precautions:

i. careful to make sure that we are not deceiving ourselves and that our desire for justice is a cloak for revenge;

ii. that all should be done with love; with the knowledge that total pardon is the more perfect way, even if we suffer, provided the common good does not demand punishment.

#### A Christian recommendation

1. Read the Gospel and do not water down the most pure wine of charity by too much thought for your rights.

2. Pardon sincerely and from the heart, kill all desire for vengeance without distinctions and divisions.

#### G: Forgive and forget

1. *How God forgets:*

(a) All his transgressions shall be forgotten, and his uprightness shall bring him life (Ez. 18. 22). That is God's way of dealing with us once we have repented. Where would we be if he did not forget?

(b) Like him, we must act in a similar way with regard to the offences committed against us. How can we truly pardon without that?

(c) However, it is useful sometimes to define what we mean by this forgetting, so as to avoid scruples and unnecessary anxiety.

2. *What is not demanded:*

(a) It does not mean loss of memory—that is not in our hands. However, we may note in passing that the tenacity of our memory depends often on the importance we give to a thing and to the impression it makes on us. The former is in our hands. By giving too much importance to an insult or offence we can fix it in our minds.

(b) There are some who cannot forget in so far as they cannot avoid a lack of sympathy or natural repugnance for those who have done them some evil.

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i. *This exists in very good people*, and usually affects others, in so far as they find it difficult to forgive ills done to their friends, etc.

ii. *it is involuntary*', they may be advised not to frequent the company of the people against whom they feel these sentiments. What they must do is try not to foment this feeling in any way or demonstrate it eternally. Especially if they happen to be in a superior position or one of authority over such persons.

(c) There is nothing against our being careful with certain persons in the future, through what they have done to us in the past; even though we must be careful not to deceive ourselves here and mistake hatred for prudence.

(d) There are some who, under the cloak of not being able to forget, hide their hatred. They say that they forgive, but cannot forget. That is no real pardon. What would be our state if God forgave but would not forget nor admit us into heaven with him?

### 3. *The forgetting which is needed:*

(a) We must act towards our neighbour as though we did not take into consideration his fault, which has already been forgiven by us. It is a forgetting of the will, not of the flesh. If a thing cannot be remedied at least it can be sweetened.

(b) Thus there is a forgetting which is of obligation, not to take revenge, not to deprive my enemy of the ordinary signs of common politeness, etc.

(c) There is another, and more perfect, which advises me to return good for evil.

## H: The need for penance

### 1. *The debt is paid by penance:*

(a) the day will come when the Lord calls us to account (Matt. 18. 23). The only way to deal with that is to settle it long beforehand.

(b) the debt exists: it is sin; we are all sinners and its infinite malice comes from the dignity of the person offended.

(c) the way to make sure that the debt vanishes before the king comes to take his account is penance.

### 2. *Qualities of repentance:*

These appear very clearly in the story of David, his sin and his repentance (2 Kings 11. 27 ff.).

(a) The prophet Nathan comes to him with his parable story:

The king is indignant against any man who could do such a thing; then Nathan points to him and says: Thou art the man! he goes on to tell him, or to remind him, of all the benefits God had given him and of the punishment which would come upon him for his sin. This is, in fact, an examination of conscience which in this case the

prophet does for the king. It is the first step in all repentance; to know ourselves, to know that we are sinners, worthy of God's anger.

(b) The second act—to repent:

The king falls on his knees and exclaims: I have sinned before the Lord. This implies three acts in one; that of repentance, that of confession of the wrong done; that of resolution not to offend again. There can be no chance of repairing the damage done unless we repent sincerely for having done it.

(c) Immediate pardon:

The prophet heard the king's words and says to him: Therefore God has pardoned your sin, you shall not die. God acts like the Lord in the Gospel, who forgives the immense debt as soon as he sees the servant on his knees before him. But the punishment follows: The son that is born to thee shall surely die (2 Kings 12.14).

(d) Temporal punishment:

Even though the sin is forgiven God reserves the right to impose punishment for it, so that his justice may have some satisfaction. David was told of the coming death of his child. So far as we are concerned, apart from the punishments which come our way in this life, God will also reserve purgatory for us. However, if we want to pay the debt we can do so, by penance in this life. It is the real object of the sacramental penance imposed on us.

(e) But the world is not fond of self-inflicted suffering:

Nor are we. However, we might like to think about the great debt we owe and the obligation we have of trying to do what is in our power to make up to God for the offence we have committed against him; that may help to make us love penance, not for its own sake, but as a means to an end—to make reparation.

## I: Dogma and history of indulgences

### i. *Dogma*.

(a) The punishment for sin:

Sin implies two elements, a separation from God and a conversion to creatures. The direct offence against God is punishable by eternal loss of happiness, in hell; the conversion to creatures is punishable in a lesser way, by what is called temporal punishment, which is also due to venial sin.

(b) Temporal punishment:

When the priest gives absolution the eternal punishment is wiped away at once together with the sin, but generally all the temporal punishment is not forgiven, through some deficiency in the dispositions of the person who receives absolution. For the total absolution of this penalty there must also be a total lack of affection for any creature, i.e. sinful affection, and that is difficult.



## (c) How is this debt to be paid?

Debts are paid with one's own money or with that of another, borrowed for the purpose. This temporal punishment may be paid in two ways :

- i. by voluntary penance in this life or by the sufferings of purgaton' in the next—both of which imply paying the debt in our own coinage.
- ii. but it can also be paid by taking the necessary sum from the treasury of the Church.

## (d) The Church is the deposit of the merits of Christ:

She is also the administrator of these merits, instituted by Christ for that purpose; and since those merits are infinite, they are more than sufficient to pay, not merely the price for sin, but also that lesser price for the punishment due to sin after its guilt has been forgiven.

## (e) The Church administers this treasure to pay off the debt of temporal punishment:

She has the power to do so and to apply to each the merits of Christ sufficient to pay off all the debt. She does it by means of indulgences; that is, by the concession to all those who perform some pious work which she determines, the application of those merits from her treasury' sufficient to obtain the remission of a punishment—the amount of which she also determines. It is the last river of pardon pouring from the wounded heart of Christ on the Cross; a river which she wants us to drink of without stint.

2. *History:*

## (a) The most ancient records:

The history of indulgences is intimately linked with that of the persecutions. In the third century there were many apostates from the faith in time of persecution and, once this had ceased, these renegades asked for pardon, using as their shield letters of recommendation which they had obtained from the Christians who were in prison for their faith or who were on the eve of martyrdom. Therefore the bishops began to grant indulgences which dispensed the apostates from their public penance in view of the sacrifice made by the martyrs. They made it quite clear that it was not merely a question of a dispensation from public penance, but also from the pains of purgatory which would have been paid in full by the public penance.

## (b) The practice becomes general:

- i. *in the Middle Ages the custom became more general, especially in the case of those who made the pilgrimage to Rome.*
- ii. *theologians begin to explain the dogma and give the reasons for it'* The Council of Trent explains the whole thing simply and clearly.

(c) The present discipline:

This still contains formulas which remind us of the ancient history of the granting of indulgences. When we come across a prayer which has attached to it five years indulgence, for example, we know that such a phrase does not imply five years off purgatory—God knows, and he alone, how much time is implied in the temporal punishment for sin. No; it means that the Church grants the remission of temporal punishment which would have been obtained through five years of the old canonical penances.

## J: The use of indulgences

### 1. *Requirements:*

It is a most useful thing to speak to the people clearly about the manner of gaining indulgences and of the conditions required. This is seldom preached and should be preached more often, because, whether we like it or not, the gaining of an indulgence will depend on the way in which we perform the works or acts prescribed by the Church. Therefore this practical sermon has been added to this series. We shall try to make it as simple as possible, keeping to the doctrine of the Church.

### 2. *The definition:*

There is a complete one which should be remembered, in the Code of Canon Law: Pardon before God of the temporal punishment due to sins which have already been forgiven as far as their guilt is concerned; a remission which is granted by ecclesiastical authority, to those who are still alive by way of absolution; to those who are dead, by way of suffrage, the compensation being taken from the treasury of the Church.

(a) Therefore it has its effect before the tribunal of the just judge—God.

(b) It is a remission of punishment, not of guilt!

### 3. *Conditions for gaining an indulgence:*

These can be divided into two classes, general conditions for all indulgences and special conditions for certain indulgences.

(a) An intention of gaining them, at least general;

(b) fulfil the prescribed conditions just as they are laid down;

(c) state of grace—at least if we desire to gain indulgences for ourselves.

### 4. *For plenary indulgences:*

That is those which remit all the temporal punishment due to all sins we have committed.

The ordinary conditions are: confession, eight days before or after; communion; visit to a church or public oratory', with prayers for the Pope's intentions. These prayers should be vocal, that is said

with the lips, not merely read or thought. Usually one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father are enough, but on certain days more is required. Thus for the Holy Souls Indulgence on the 2nd of November, six Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glorias are necessary.

5. *For partial indulgences:*

Fulfil the conditions laid down:

(a) If a prayer, it has to be vocal—this is important; there is only one exception, the case of ejaculations, which can be made mentally and the indulgence gained.

(b) If a pious work, it must be done exactly as laid down, without any substantial variation, and personally, with a interior spirit of piety, i.e. to worship.

6. *Training:*

It is necessary to train our people in devotion to prayers and good works which have indulgences attached to them.

(a) As a simple means granted readily by the Church of making use of the merits of Christ in order to pay the debt we owe of temporal punishment due to sins.

(b) As a simple suffrage for the souls in purgatory, which is, at once an act of charity and devotion to God.

(c) Especially useful in this connection is the Heroic Act.

## K: Pardon and the mystical Body of Christ

1. *The social motive:*

Among the other motives for forgiving those who offend us we might say that pride of place should be given to this one, the social motive of the mystical Body. Any society, and the Church is not an exception, needs unity if it is to survive and live as it should. Where would a society be if all the time it were divided by hatred and thoughts of revenge?

The common good can often make us give up our rights, or at least, postpone them for a time. That is why this motive is so important, because it may force us to give up the right we have to punish an offender.

2. *The unity of the mystical Body of Christ:*

It is not necessary to study the notion of it in St Paul at the moment, but merely those conclusions which come from the idea of our unity within that body.

(a) In that body all should be united, serving one another (Rom. 12. 4-8);

(b) it can grow, and we can be the cause of that growth;

(c) by increasing the image of God within us, clothed with the new man which is renewed without ceasing so as to grow in that perfect knowledge in the image of our creator (Col. 3. 10);



(d) this divine homage is reproduced in us by means of charity; God is love, and so is the charity which is poured forth in our hearts by the Spirit.

i. therefore we must imitate God as most dear sons and grow in charity (Eph. 5. 1-2).

ii. charity is the bond of perfection; the peace of Christ must reign in our hearts, because for that we have been called in one body (Col. 3. 14-15).

(e) The most perfect way of attaining this is by the imitation of Christ, the head of the body.

### 3. *The need for pardon:*

From these texts, taken from those passages of St Paul's writings in which he stresses the need for charity and pardon, he deduces the need for the latter.

(a) How can the union and co-operation between the members of the body be maintained in the midst of anger and hatred, revenge and the thought of it? Love unites, hatred brings disunity. That is why, in the same chapter of Romans in which he speaks of the functions of the members of the body, he concludes: Let your charity be sincere . . . loving one another . . . bless those who persecute you . . . do not return evil for evil . . . as far as in you lies, have peace with all men (Rom. 12. 9-21).

(b) Therefore the union of the body demands a charity which leads us to pardon offences committed against us. Here, then, is one who wears chains in the Lord's service, pleading with you to live as befits men called to such a vocation as yours. You must be always humble, always gentle; patient too, in bearing with one another's faults, as charity bids; eager to preserve that unity the Spirit gives you, whose bond is peace (Eph. 4. 1-3; Cf. *ibid.* 12-15).

### 4. *This is the motive which will make us go beyond the thought of our rights:*

(a) David had the right to kill Saul, but not merely did he not make use of it, but in the cave scene he tried to lead Saul to love and charity (1 Kings 23. 4-23). The Lord had a right to wipe out Judas, yet he still calls him friend in spite of his treason. What do my rights matter, when he who offends me also belongs to the same body as I do and I, through my charity, may increase the growth of that body?

(b) For the Christian who is conscious of this obligation there can be only one rule of life: Feed thy enemy if he is hungry, give him drink if he is thirsty; by doing this, thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head. Do not be disarmed by malice; disarm malice with kindness (Rom. 12. 20-21).

*Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost*

## THE TRIBUTE TO CAESAR

### SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Philippians i. 6-11

Gospel; Matthew 22. 15-21. Cf.  
Mark 12.13-17; Luke 20.20-26

Some texts which have reference to this passage of the  
Gospels

1. *He who governs does so as a minister of God:*

In even' fortified city he appointed judges; and this was the charge he gave them: Take heed how you perform your office; it is the Lord's commission you hold, not man's, and according to the award you make, yourselves will be judged. 2 Par. 19. 5-6.

Power is none but comes to you from the Lord, nor any royalty but from One who is above all. He it is that will call you to account for your doings, with a scrutiny that reads your inmost thoughts. Wis. 6. 4.

The magistrate is God's minister, working for thy good. Only if thou dost wrong needst thou be afraid; it is not for nothing that he bears the sword; he is God's minister still, to inflict punishment on the wrong-doer. Rom. 13. 4.

2. *Qualities and duties of princes:*

Princes, take warning; learn your lesson, you that rule the world. Tremble, and sense the Lord, rejoicing in his presence, but with awe in your hearts. Ps. 2. 10-11.

Ill fares the people that guidance has none; safety reigns where counsel abounds. Prov. 11. 14.

Great people, great king; it is for want of men crowns are lost. . . . Duty well done, a whole nation becomes great; suffer whole peoples for guilt incurred. A king shows favour to a wise servant; disappoint him, and thou shalt feel his anger. Prov. 14. 28, 34-35.

Let a king rule justly, wrong-doing shall be winnowed away under his scrutiny . . . Fan and flail a wise king has for the ill-doer. . . . What is a king's best bodyguard? Mercy and faithfulness; on mercy his throne rests. Prov. 20. 8, 26, 28.

When right thrives, the city is all rejoicing; when there be knaves that rule it, all lament. . . . King that listens to false rumour, has a worthless court. Poor men and their masters dwell side by side, sharing the Lord's sunlight. King that gives due redress to the poor

has a throne unshakeable. Prov. 29. 2, 12-14. Cf. Eccles. 10. 5-7; Wis. i. i.; 6. 10, 21.

A wise ruler, a folk well disciplined; firm sits prudence on the throne. Like king, like court; like ruler, like subjects. Royal folly is a people's ruin; where prudence reigns, there cities thrive most. God's will it is then, that rules a nation; when the time comes, he will give it the prince it needs. Eccles. 10. 1-4.

### 3. *Obligations of subjects:*

If thou wouldst be free from the fear of authority, do right, and thou shalt win its approval. Rom. 13. 3.

Brethren, we would ask you to pay deference to those who work among you, those who have charge of you in the Lord, and give you directions; make it a rule of charity to hold them in special esteem, in honour of the duty they perform, and maintain unity with them, i Thess. 5. 12-13.

Obey those who have charge over you, and yield to their will; they are keeping unwearied watch over your souls, because they know they will have an account to give. Make it a grateful task for them; it is your own loss if they find it a laborious effort. Heb. 13.17.

For love of the Lord, then, bow to every kind of human authority; to the king, who enjoys the chief power, and to the magistrates who hold his commission to punish criminals and encourage honest men ... to the king, due honour. 1 Pet. 2. 13-14, 17.

### 4. *The paying of tribute:*

But we will not hurt their consciences; go down to the sea, and cast thy hook; take out the first fish thou drawest up, and when thou hast opened its mouth thou wilt find a silver coin there; with this make payment to them for me and for thyself. Matt. 17. 26.

Thou must needs, then, be submissive, not only for fear of punishment, but in conscience. It is for this same reason that you pay taxes; magistrates are in God's service, and must give all their time to it. Pay every man, then, his due; taxes, if it be taxes, customs if it be customs; respect and honour, if it be respect and honour. Rom. 13. 5-7.

### 5. *Prayer for rulers:*

This first of all, I ask; that petition, prayer, entreaty and thanksgiving should be offered for all mankind, especially for kings and others in high station, so that we can live a calm and tranquil life as dutifully and decently as we may. Such prayer is our duty. . . . i Tim. 2. 1-3.

### 6. *Punished for rebellion:*

Thus the man who opposes authority is a rebel against the ordinance of God, and rebels secure their own condemnation. Rom.



## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

## I. LITURGICAL

Dom Guéranger affirms that the Mass of today is concerned with the last judgement and the difficulties of the Church in the time of the Antichrist.

In accordance with this theory the Introit and the Offertory, both of them sad in their note, represent the cry of the soul conscious of its sins, fearful of God's judgements, but with confidence in him; for which reason it rests on him and asks for his help. There is no reason why we should reject this opinion. On the contrary, it is very likely that, at the time this Mass was composed, a time when the general opinion was that the last coming would take place in the year 1000, the thought of Antichrist would inspire passages like those we have mentioned. Just as it is likely that these last Sundays after Pentecost took their general theme from the last of all. That solemn memory of the last judgement must have coloured many of the liturgical passages from the 18th Sunday onwards.

Nor must we forget that the liturgy is a life in which the Christians of the Middle Ages took an active share, drawing their piety from it and their meditations. The memory of some passages inspired others; thus the Introit and Offertory of today could easily have been inspired by the Gospel of the previous Sunday, in which the accent is on man, God's debtor.

The Introit, taken from Ps. 129, is sad, but full of confidence. If thou, Lord, take heed of our iniquities, Master, who has strength to bear it? Ah, but with thee there is forgiveness. Commenting on this idea, Schuster says: As St Gregory the Great teaches us, man can only presume in his own justice when he falls back on himself and concentrates solely on his own egoism. Such a state is a prelude to condemnation. On the other hand, hardly has he lifted his eyes towards God, meditating on the divine holiness, his supreme right over all his creatures and the inscrutable nature of his judgements, then he will feel the light of the Holy Spirit, which will make him see the ignominy of his deformity. Then that which before was the object of vainglory in the soul will become an argument for sadness, on seeing that even his good works are contaminated with a thousand defects. This divine light which places the soul on the path of true humility is a great grace, since it is the first source from which springs the holy fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom.

The Gospel and Epistle form a section apart. The centre of the Gospel message is not so much the question put to Christ by the Pharisees, but his reply, in which he turns what appears to be a

purely political issue into a religious one. To Caesar what is his, and to God what belongs to God.

Commentators see here an expression of the duty of religion or piety; just as they see in the first half of the reply that of patriotism or piety as applied to one's country. The liturgy takes up this idea and represents it again in the Epistle, where we see that what Paul asks for his converts is nothing else but the collection of virtues which make up true piety.

It would also appear that this is the plea of the Collect, although it is not mentioned expressly, since the prayer is directed to God, author of piety. Both the theme of piety and that of patriotism may be treated of in today's homily, but especially the former.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Philippians 1. 6-11

#### 1. *Argument:*

St Paul had a special affection for the faithful in Philippi for many reasons, since it was the first city of that part of Macedonia which he visited when he was called by the Holy Spirit to carry the Gospel to that part of the world. What is more, they were always very loyal to him. That little colony of Jews must have been so small that it had no real synagogue, but used a place near a river for its prayer. That was where the apostle went and very soon Lydia made him dwell in her house. When Paul and his companion Silas had to leave, after having been put in prison and flogged by reason of the possessed girl whom they cured, they said goodbye to this family, which they consoled and visited again on the way from Greece, persecuted by the Jews. The argument of this Epistle, more familiar in tone than the others before it, is as short as is the letter itself:

(a) A brief introduction.

(b) He consoles them from prison and tells them of the great fruits which are being derived from his captivity. He hopes to see them again soon.

(c) He advises them to be charitable and obedient, like Christ;

(d) he warns them against those who will try to convert them to Jewish ways again;

(e) says his goodbye after giving some special recommendations.

#### 2. *Texts:*

(a) Nor am I less confident. . .

This verse is intimately connected with the previous one, in which he gives thanks to God and prays for the Philippians, whom he remembers for that union in the Gospel. The Pauline phrase has passed into the doctrine of grace, where we state that it is God

who inspires all good works, gives us perseverance in them and brings them to perfection.

(b) ready for the day when Christ Jesus comes . . .

Another typically Pauline phrase. On that day justice will be done, but that is only one of its aspects. It will be the day when our union with Christ will reach its perfection.

(c) It is only fitting that I should entertain such hopes for you...

On what is his certainty' based that God will help them? First of all, on the goodness of God; then on the good heart of the Philippians, since God will not desert anyone unless he himself be deserted first, as St Augustine is so fond of saying. It is also based on St Paul's very love for them, because it is based on the actions of the faithful who have joined with him in his work of the ministry'. Just as he has confidence that he will finish his race, so he has confidence that they will do so as well.

(d) I know that you all share my happiness in being a prisoner ...

The words have been badly translated in the A'ulgate, and what is there described as happiness most certainly means grace, possibly the grace of the ministry, with which they have been associated in so many' ways, by almsdeeds, etc. Or it may mean the grace of merit acquired, which will be shared between the preacher and those who have been his helpers. They saw' him flogged in Philippi and now in chains in Rome, and in him they have all suffered.

(e) God knows how I long for you all, with the tenderness of Jesus Christ himself:

The first qualification for an apostle and a ruler is that of love for his own. Without that, all other qualifications are useless. But this love must be in Christ, supernatural, without any contamination of human affections which could lead to a loss of many graces. Because it is supernatural it will be universal.

(f) and this is my prayer for you . . .

One of the most fertile passages of Paul's writings. Grace can increase charity', and together with it, merit. This increase is a steady one until we reach the heights of charity in glory. But charity is not a sentimental impulse; it is a rational act, one which takes with it an act of the intellect. That is why Paul prays that they may increase in the fulness of knowledge and perception. It is the knowledge of God as our last end that he prays for, so that they may learn to prize that which is of real value, that there may be no stain on their consciences, no faltering in their progress until the day of Christ. Then they will reap the full harvest of their justification; all for the glory' and praise of God.



## B: The Gospel: Matthew 22. 15-21

i. *Historical situation and argument:*

On that turbulent Holy Tuesday Christ's enemies, either all of them (as would appear from St Mark) or only the Pharisees, were so annoyed by the parable of the renters of the vineyard, knowing that it was aimed at them, that they came together and took counsel. The order of the day was to try to take hold of Christ, but they were afraid of the crowds; therefore they decided to send to him some of the Pharisees and Herodians to trap him if they could.

A kind of equilibrium had been reached between the followers of Christ on the one hand and the Pharisees and chief priests on the other. It would be too dangerous to seize him by day, and at night he was careful to withdraw without letting anyone know where he went. It would be necessary to break this situation up, and so they must trap him if they can. They must either separate the people from their loyalty to him, which would be the ideal solution; or they must throw into the balance the power of Rome. The Pharisees did not like this latter idea, but they were willing to forget their hatred for Caesar in order to kill Christ.

Having decided to take this latter action the different parts in the affair are distributed. The Sadducees have the task of presenting for solution a gross, sensual question to which they did not think he would know the answer. The Pharisees took a different, more spiritual, more Jewish rôle. They did not think he could escape from this one.

The question is as follows: The Jews, in spite of the fact that, with the exception of a brief period under the Machabees, they had been under foreign domination for centuries, now saw their nationalism flourish again, in expectation of the coming of the Messiah, who was, according to them, going to free them from the foreign yoke. This was just the moment when Rome deposed Archelaus, changed Judaea into a simple province and sent the procurators, "who, as the first sign of rule, imposed the tribute to Caesar. The reaction was so violent that it led to open rebellion on the part of one Judas of Galilee. The zealots represented this spirit of Judas, who was one of them.

The trap could not have been better set. If Christ answers in the affirmative the people will be alienated. What Messiah is this who preaches submission to the Gentile yoke? If he denies that it is lawful, there are the Herodians to denounce him, as they actually did falsely later on (Luke 23. 2). But it is never easy to trap infinite wisdom. As if he were not saying anything very wise, he applies a Talmud principle; if the dominion of a ruler extends over all that territory where his money is in use, then since you are using his

money you must do your duty as citizens. However, more justly still, we must give to God what is his due.

2. *Texts:*

(a) After this the Pharisees withdrew and plotted together . . .

We need not confine this plotting to the Pharisees; it would seem from St Mark that there were other elements included, and also from the final composition of the embassy. Both good and evil, if they wish to triumph, must take care and prepare even down to the minutest details of their campaign, and who knows if evil is not, in this, more astute than the children of light?

(b) And they sent their own disciples . . . with those who were of Herod's party . . .

Disciples, so that they would not be recognized; their very youth would make the question seem more natural. The Herodians are the partisans of the dynasty of Herod, who wished that rule to continue, but under subjection to Rome. They and the Pharisees are poles apart, yet here they are together against Christ! Evil, making use of any and every means to vanquish good. Yet how often we Catholics, who should have a common spiritual end in view, allow our efforts to be wasted because of some stupid little thing which divides us.

(c) Master, we know' well thou art sincere, and teachest in all sincerity the way of God; that thou boldest no one in awe . . .

There are many points of meditation here. In the first place, the way of acting of the hypocrite. He praises without being sincere; yet why are we so willing to believe all that is said to us as long as it contains some praise of ourselves?

The arms of evil appear very clearly in this picture, arms which often put the good man in a difficult position, were it not for the grace of God. Binding a man with his own conscience when the evil man has no intention of binding his own; demanding conduct according to norms which the one who attacks us has no intention of observing himself. . . . Let our rule be to flee from the flatterer, the disguised enemy, a disaster for our spiritual life.

But the Pharisees do draw for us a clear picture of what the preacher of the Word should be. He should seek only the truth, which is also the good. He must present the ideal, clearly and without diminution. The way of God, for the Jews, meant the law; and it is there that the preacher must seek his arguments, not in vain, human reasons, but in the Word of God. He must not be an acceptor of persons, being guided by human respect. Let him keep in mind the old saying: Caesar's friend, but a greater friend of truth.

(d) why do you thus put me to the test? . . . Hypocrites!

He turns their very praise of him against them. He is not in awe of them, nor will he make any distinction between man and man! He tells them the truth, plainly.

(e) Show me the coinage in which the tribute is paid:

Historians are not yet certain how much had to be paid in tribute; but it would appear to be a silver denarius. It is not certain either whether the coin shown to Christ bore Caesar's image or not, because the Romans were rather careful about annoying their Jewish province, and permission had been given for coinage to be used there which did not bear the head of the emperor, but instead palms, etc., which the Jews permitted. However, the scene took place in the temple, and it would have been easy for one of them to find a silver denarius at the tables of the money changers . . . In any case, we do know that the Pharisees, so scrupulous in other matters, were not so careful when it came to money! It would seem that the coin produced, no matter where it came from, did have Caesar's image on it, from our Lord's question: Whose is this likeness? The Fathers of the Church made use of this to point out that, just as the coin carried the image of Caesar, so we carry that of God. This image was rubbed out by sin, restored in all its glory by the redemption of Christ.

(f) give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's:

Our Lord does not intend to reply to the question; he simply argues like this. Since you are carrying this coinage around with you, or at least it is in use in your country, you are implicitly admitting Caesar as your overlord. Therefore you should pay him tribute, since you are making use of his administration. However, there is no such incompatibility as you imagine. The kingdom of God is not something national, which will unite spiritual and temporal power in one. There will be two powers, one to look after the temporal welfare of the citizens, the other to take care of their souls. Respect them both and fulfil your obligations to them both. He puts the question on a much higher plane and it is doubtful if his hearers would have understood all the implications of his words; but since they were meant for all time, that does not really matter.

## SECTION III. A FATHER OF THE CHURCH

### ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

#### Render to Caesar

(Summary of Homily 23 on the 13th chapter of Romans relative to the origin of authority and the need to obey it. The material



provided by this Homily has been used by many authors up to the present day. P.G. 32, 613-622.)

*I. Submission to superior authority :*

Every soul must be submissive to its lawful superiors (Rom. 13. 1). St Paul, who has already spoken many times about the obedience which subjects owe to their rulers, comes back to the same theme, showing that Christ has not given his laws so as to dethrone those of ordinary political economy, but to better them, teaching us to avoid useless and superfluous dissensions. It is worthy of note that the apostle does this after having talked about meekness, necessary even in the case of those who are not our enemies. In effect, if we are not to do harm even to those who have done us an injury, much less to those who have given their lives to looking after us. He demands total obedience, even to the priests and monks, because piety does not free us from due subjection.

*2. Its divine origin:*

The first reason which he gives for this is that there is no authority except from God, and all authorities that hold sway are of his ordinance. What, then? Is every prince elected by God? I do not refer to that, because it is not a question of whether each ruler has been chosen by God, but of authority in itself. It is part of divine wisdom that some should rule while others obey, and such things are not done by chance, as if nations were ruled by the waves. It is not the ruler who comes from God, but his authority, because authority comes from God only . . . God instituted matrimony, but not in the sense that he took it upon himself to look for wives for the husbands . . . but as Christ says, because God made them male and female and adds, for this reason shall a man leave father and mother . . . A wise man, interpreting these words, said : Seeing that absolute equality would mean continual war among us, he instituted obedience and authority between man and woman, son and father, old and young, servant and freeman, ruler and subject.

This is the organization which nature uses in her flocks, in her hives and even in our own body, whose members are subject one to another, while the head has charge of the whole. Where no one rules, there is disorder and evil.

*3. No resisting of authority:*

Once the origin of society has been established St Paul draws a conclusion: the man who opposes authority is a rebel against the ordinance of God. With which he wants to establish a wholesome fear in us and demonstrate that he is speaking of a true obligation. But in case any of the faithful should think that he is lowering the heirs to the kingdom of God by making them obey earthly rulers he

makes them see that they are not obeying men, but God. He goes further, threatening with a most just condemnation if they dare to fight against the Lord. He shows them that it is not a favour they do, but an obligation they have of giving that obedience. By these words he drew heathen rulers to the true faith and also won obedience from the faithful, because at that time the word had gone around that the apostles were guilty *of* sedition and out to establish a new order to destroy the law of the community. That the punishment is not a light one he indicates clearly when he says that rebels secure their own condemnation.

4. *Authority not an enemy of the good:*

There is no reason for fear, because authority is not an enemy of the good. He says: A good conscience has no need to go in fear of the magistrate. . . . If thou wouldst be free from the fear of authority do right, and thou shalt win its approval; the magistrate is God's minister, working for thy good. Authority, far from making you fear, will approve of your actions; far from putting obstacles in your way, it will co-operate with you. It will make virtue easier for you, by punishing the wicked and heaping benefits and honours on the good, thus co-operating with the will of God, of which it is a minister. Think well on it; I give you advice; the ruler or his magistrates command you by the law; I advise that no one should be a thief; the judge lays that obligation on you. Therefore he is your helper and assistant, given to you by God for that purpose. There are two reasons why you should have respect for him; the fact that he has been commissioned by God and the important task which has been handed over to him.

It is not the prince but our own evil that makes us fear him; he carries a sword, says St Paul, who presents the ruler to us as a fierce soldier, warring against evil. . . . And if the ruler knows nothing of all this? Yet it is still God who has laid it down thus, and when the ruler punishes or when he does honour to someone, he does it as a minister of God who defends virtue, puts an end to evil and praises God . . . . There are many who began to practise virtue from fear of the magistrates; later they came to embrace it from the fear of God, because the common people think more of the present than of the future.

5. *A duty of conscience to submit:*

Be submissive, not only for fear of punishment, but in conscience (v. 6). What does this mean, not only for fear? It means that apart from obeying because otherwise you will bring down on yourself the punishments of both God and men, you should also do it because authority brings great benefits to you, since it gives you both peace and civil administration. Society enjoys great advantages through its rulers, and if they were to vanish all would

fall. Neither cities nor towns could continue to exist, houses, the law courts—nothing could remain standing. All would be destroyed, because the powerful would devour the weak. Therefore, even if the threat of punishment did not exist for those who are disobedient to authority, you must still submit so as not to appear ungrateful or without a conscience before your benefactor.

6. *The paying of tribute and taxes:*

It is for this same reason that you pay taxes (v. 6). St Paul gives two reasons, the first addressed to all, whether Christian or gentile; the second is for Christians. Truly all the benefits conferred on us by authority, such as order, peace, public services, the army, public offices and so on, are recognized and admitted by the payment of tribute and taxes. It is necessary that the public should know the benefits they receive from the State so that they may contribute to the good estate of their ruler, and it is just that those who dedicate their lives to the protection of ours should be duly recompensed for their labours by these contributions.

Having explained these reasons, which are useful both for Christian and gentile alike, St Paul turns to the Christians, and adds another: Magistrates are in God's service, and must give all their time to it. This is their whole life's task, that you should enjoy peace, that is why, in another epistle, he tells you that, apart from being submissive to them, you should also pray for them, giving as the reason that so all may live in peace and tranquillity (1 Tim. 2. 1-2).

Do not tell me that some abuse their power, because what you should look at is the good gained by this type of constitution of things, and then you will admit the great wisdom of the law which arranged it thus from the beginning.

Pay every man, then, his due; taxes, if it be taxes; customs, if it be customs; respect and honour, if it be respect and honour (v. 7). Give them, not only money, but honour and fear, a fear which is not terror but honour. And do not imagine that this lowers your status, because you are giving these things to one who represents God, and it is him whom you are honouring when, on the arrival of the ruler, you stand up and bare your head. And if St Paul could command this in the case of rulers who were gentiles, we must be even more careful now to observe this law among Christians.

Do not ask whether you are more or less virtuous; it is not the time for that now. Our life is hidden in Christ, on the day of whose coming we shall all shine with his brilliance. At the moment present yourselves with a certain fear and respect before your ruler, because God wills it that he, created by him, should receive his power.



## ST THOMAS AQUINAS

### SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

## ST THOMAS AQUINAS

### Craftiness; Respect of Persons; Hypocrisy

#### 1. *Craftiness*:

##### (a) Definition:

When a man uses means that are not true but fictitious and counterfeit, in order to attain a certain end, whether good or evil.

##### (b) A sin against prudence:

It can sometimes be confused with this virtue, owing to some likeness between them, in outward appearances at least (2-2. q. 55. a. 3).

##### (c) Worldly prudence:

It is sometimes called worldly prudence, although the two are distinct sins, since the former refers to the end and the latter, craftiness, to the means. Guile pertains to craftiness. It belongs to craftiness to adopt ways that are not true but counterfeit and apparently true, in order to attain some end, either good or evil. Now the adopting of such -ways may be subjected to a twofold consideration; first as regards the process of thinking them out, and this belongs properly to craftiness, even as thinking out right ways to a due end belongs to prudence. Secondly the adopting of suchlike ways may be considered with regard to their execution, and in this way it belongs to guile. Hence guile denotes a certain execution of craftiness, and accordingly belongs thereto (*Ibid.* a. 4). Both guile and fraud are against true simplicity (2-2. q. 11. a. 3).

#### 2. *Respect of persons*:

##### (a) Definition:

He does not define it in the strict sense, but he does assign certain elements or qualities to it which enable us to reach a definition. If one considers, he says, that personal quality by reason of which the thing allotted to a particular person is due to him, this is respect, not of the person, but of the cause. . . . For instance, if you promote a man to a professorship on account of his having sufficient knowledge, you consider the due cause, not the person; but if, in conferring something on someone, you consider in him, not the fact that what you give him is proportionate or due to him, but the fact that he is this particular man (Peter or Martin), then there is respect of the person, since you give him something not for some cause that renders him worthy of it, but simply because he is this person. . . . It follows accordingly that respect of persons is opposed to distributive justice in that it fails to observe due proportion. Now nothing



but sin is opposed to virtue; and therefore respect of persons is a sin (2-2. q. 63. a. 1. c).

(b) It can take place even in the dispensing of spiritual things, but here we must take something else into consideration. He says:

It must be observed that a person's worthiness may be considered in two ways. First, simply and absolutely; and in this way the man who abounds the more in the spiritual gifts of grace is the more worthy. Secondly, in relation to the common good; for it happens at times that the less holy and less learned man may conduce more to the common good on account of worldly authority or activity or something of the kind. And since the dispensation of spiritualities is directed chiefly to the common good ... it follows that in the dispensation of spiritualities the simply less good are sometimes preferred to the better, without respect of persons, just as God sometimes bestows gratuitous graces on the less worthy (*ibid.* a. 2).

(c) It can take place both in regard to honour and also judicial sentences.

### 3. *Hypocrisy*:

As Isidore says, the word hypocrite is derived from the appearance of those who come on to the stage with a disguised face, by changing the colour of their complexion so as to imitate the complexion of the person they simulate, at one time under the guise of a man, at another under the guise of a woman, so as to deceive the people in their acting. Hence Augustine says, that just as hypocrites by simulating other persons act the parts of those they are **not**... so too in the Church and in every department of life, whoever 'wishes to seem what he is not is a hypocrite; for he pretends to be just without being so in reality.

(a) It is against truth:

We must reply that dissimulation or hypocrisy may be opposed to a virtue in two ways, in one way directly, in another way indirectly. Its direct opposition or contrariety\* is to be considered with regard to the very species of the act, and this species depends on that act's proper object. Wherefore, since hypocrisy is a kind of dissimulation, whereby a man simulates a character which is not his, it follows that it is directly opposed to truth, whereby a man shows himself in life and speech to be what he is. . . .

The indirect opposition or contrariety\* of hypocrisy may be considered in relation to any accident, for instance a remote end, or an instrument of action, or anything else of that kind (*ibid.* a. 3).

(b) It can be a mortal or a venial sin:

There are two things in hypocrisy, lack of holiness and simulation thereof. Accordingly, if by hypocrite we mean a person whose

intention is directed to both the above, one, namely, who cares not to be holy but only to appear so, in which sense Holy Scripture is wont to use the term, it is evident that hypocrisy is a mortal sin; for no one is entirely deprived of holiness save through mortal sin.

But if by a hypocrite we mean one who intends to simulate holiness, which he lacks through mortal sin, then although he is in mortal sin, whereby he is deprived of holiness, yet in his case, the dissimulation itself is not always a mortal sin, but sometimes a venial one. This will depend on the end in view; for if this be contrary to the love of God and his neighbour, it will be a mortal sin; for instance, if he were to simulate holiness in order to disseminate false doctrine or that he may obtain ecclesiastical preferment, though unworthy, or that he may obtain any temporal good in which he fixes his end. If, however, the end intended be not contrary to charity, it will be a venial sin . . . (*ibid.* a. 4).

## NOTE: THE QUESTION OF INVESTITURE AND GALLICANISM

(In the course of history these were the two questions which brought to a head the conflict between Church and State; therefore a very brief summary of them will not be out of place. There is still danger in some places that they may revive.)

### 1. *Investiture.*

This is a problem which, while rife in the whole of Europe, was nevertheless concentrated in Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. In the ninth century the word investiture implied the granting of possession, usually accompanied by the handing over of some object connected with the thing possessed or sold, *e.g.* a sod in the case of the buying of a field. In the same century we find the custom by which the owner of a church used to grant possession, by means of a special ceremony, to the priest or bishop who was promoted to that church. In the case of the bishops this was usually done by the king. The origin of this custom is purely temporal and came from pious foundations, lands, etc., through the giving of which the donor intended to reserve to himself the right of presentation.

This right, which could have been tolerated if handled correctly, soon gave rise to most grave abuses, since it soon forgot the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual, and very soon it became the custom to confer the latter as well as the former—a grave abuse which robbed the Church of her rights to appoint the right man to bishoprics and monasteries. The immediate result was simony on a grand scale; bishoprics became the possessions of a few influential families, and of course, with the logical result that the morals of those who were appointed were often not all that could be desired, to say the least of it. Thus, Henry III of Germany, the son



of Conrad II, said to a meeting of bishops : Corrupted by your avarice, you have bought and sold divine grace; even my father, for the salvation of whose soul I fear, fell into the same fault.

Hildebrand became Pope; one who knew the problem intimately and possessed both the sanctity and the character to solve it. In the Synod of Rome, 1075, he promulgated the famous decree by which he declared invalid any investiture made by laymen and excommunicated those who accepted any benefice from lay hands. In his lifetime the doctrine became clearly established. The spiritual power does not depend in any way on kings or princes. Bishops will be elected according to the Canons. In so far as temporal goods are concerned, once they have been given over to the Church they belong to her absolutely. Episcopal dignity demands temporal possessions, and it is not the temporal which takes with it the spiritual.

The struggle of Gregory VII against Henry' is well known in history. The penance done at Canossa was nothing more than a trick to recover the obedience of the rebel lords, because once he had recovered it, he went on not merely to demand for himself the right to nominate bishops, but even that of nomination to the very chair of Peter itself.

Gregory died in exile in 1085 and the Emperor followed him in 1105. His successor, Henry V, after a long struggle in which he even supported anti-popes, gave in to Calixtus II in the Concord of Worms. He gave up the right to hand over the pastoral staff and ring, granting to the Church complete freedom of both nomination and investiture. The Pope, in return, gave him permission to grant the temporals of a benefice by' means of the handing over of a sceptre.

## 2. *Gallicanism*:

### (a) Definition and division:

Here we must distinguish carefully between political and ecclesiastical Gallicanism, even though at times the two go hand in hand, while at others they are clearly separated. There are two elements here, joined in one; the oppression of the jurisdiction of the Church by the lay power, and the refusal on the part of the French clergy to submit to the full authority of the Pope. Here we may limit our exposition to political Gallicanism, as being more in relation with today's Gospel.

### (b) Political Gallicanism:

It never really formulated a complete doctrinal summary of its tenets; the nearest we can get is that of Peter Pithou, who tried to condense into eighty-three propositions the main tenets of Gallicanism, laying down as the fundamental principles: that the popes have no authority, neither general nor particular, over temporal affairs in French territory. The spiritual authority of the Pope in France is limited by the statutes and customs of the nation.

From these principles he deduced some very odd conclusions, among them that the king was the only one who had the right to call national councils, permit the entrance into French territory of Papal Legates or the visits of the bishops to Rome, etc. He gave as his reasons that, until the sixth century, the Pope had no authority at all in France and that, during the whole of that period, it was the king, not the Pope, who was considered to be the head of the Church in France. It will be clear that this doctrine is born of an exaggerated sentiment of nationalism, rife in France throughout all her history, right up to the time of Napoleon. It was broken finally by the Revolution. Louis XIV had broken Protestantism in France, but the revenge came in the form of a rationalist philosophy, from which came the so-called Revolution. This, after casting aside the Church and her powers, could no longer attempt a co-ordination between Church and State, even though very recent history gives us some signs that the spirit of political Gallicanism is not altogether dead.

## SECTION V. A SPIRITUAL WRITER

### ST THOMAS OF VILLANOVA

#### The image of God in man

(This may be a mystical interpretation of the Gospel, but it is one which is frequent in the writings of the Fathers. The author sees in man the coin which bears the image and likeness of God, to whom, therefore, it should be given back, since it is his.)

#### i. Man does not know how valuable he is:

There was not money enough in the whole world to redeem man and the Word of God became golden coinage to pay our debt. Tell me, O Virgin Mary, whose image and inscription is this ? But, do you not know him? No; there is no beauty or comeliness in him! Read : Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. He appears before our eyes, flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone, but hidden away there is the stamp of Caesar, the Figure of God the Father, whose Son he is.

You also, O man, carry with you the image of God, in whose likeness you were created. Like the Spouse of the Canticles, you do not know your beauty, and you run after things unworthy of you, by strange paths, after exterior things, empty and vain as they are; after the things of sense. And why ? Because you do not know yourself. Listen, all ye pilgrims here below, travelling in vessels of clay, do not look at your exterior appearance, but to that which you carry within you. Whose is this image and superscription?

2. *The image of God:*

The excellence of man lies in the fact that he is an image of God. That which my Father gave me is the best of all gifts. And what did he give save the splendour of his glory and the image of his substance? Both the Son and man are images of God, although in a different way. The Son is the possessor of a substantial likeness, man is an image merely.

Just as kings reserve to themselves the right to put their image on the coinage of most value, so God reserved his image for man, leaving only a small vestige for other creatures.

The soul is like God because it reproduces his simplicity, incorruptible nature and liberty'. The intellect produces ideas and is followed up by the love of the will. Just as God is life, so the soul gives life to the whole body in which it is, in the whole and in each part, governing and directing all. What is the soul in the body save an image of God in the world?

3. *The supernatural likeness:*

God said, not without mysten", let us make man to our image and likeness. The nature of God shines in our nature and his goodness in his free gifts to us. The Trinity is mirrored in our faculties, but his sanctity is in the soul of the just.

That phrase of St Paul (1 Cor. 15. 47) to the effect that the first man was earthly, the second Adam heavenly, encloses all my thought, because it shows us how God desired that we should be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom. 8. 29) both exteriorly and interiorly, until the last day, in which, having reformed our hearts, he will reach even to the body of our lowliness, to make that too like his own glorified body. What happens in the case of painters happens in ours too; because they usually begin by drawing the figure of the king, and then add the colours little by little until they have reproduced all his splendour and glorious majesty. In much the same way, now we are sons of God, but what we shall be hereafter has not been made known as yet. When that time comes our likeness will shine in all its perfection; then burning like coal in the heart of the fire, images of God, painted from nature, what shall we seem to be but gods ourselves?... You will look at God and he will look at you, and you will see yourself as another God. If you, O soul, considered your real beauty you would never look at any other creature; O image of God, blood of Christ, spouse of Jesus, companion of the angels, what is there between you and the flesh?

4. *The inscription:*

Apart from his image, God has engraved on the soul an inscription, which is none other than the natural law and reason by which to know it. The precepts of the law are written in their hearts and



their consciences are witness to it, says Paul. God is the creator and Master of nature; a Principle which illumines, Truth which creates, creator who is also the giver of truth, and who, on engraving the natural law on our hearts, has told us whose we are, stating whose image this is. Read that message, O Soul, that inscription which you bear. . . .

Our soul, divine coinage as it is, must carry always this inscription, becoming more and more like Christ, in accordance with that phrase of St Paul: We carry about continually in our bodies the dying state of Jesus, so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies too (2 Cor. 4. 10). Thus, on the day of judgement, when the Lord shows us that sacred Model of his holy Humanity, we shall be able to show him too its reproduction in our soul.

##### 5. *Consequences:*

(a) If you live by the Spirit then live according to that same Spirit:

Trees give fruit according to their nature. Would one sell a beautiful princess to a slave for a few pence? Yet you would sell yourself, queen of the world, blood of Christ, to the devil for a triviality.

(b) To God the things that are God's:

The Lord says, Son, give me thy heart; that is the money, the tribute I ask of you.

(c) On the day of judgement God will say:

You all pretend to belong to me, but tell me, whose image and inscription is this? You must belong to Caesar, because your works are his and so are your intentions. The works are the image, the intentions the inscription.

You are the child of your works; if thy eye, that is, your intention, is clear, the whole of thy body will be lit up (Matt. 6. 22), and all your works will shine. You give alms, and it is a good work; but let us look at the inscription. Through vanity? It is no longer of God but of Caesar.

(d) Guard carefully this coin:

Your enemies, the devil, the world and the flesh, long to rob you of it.

(e) On the day of judgement the Lord will ask:

Whose image is this? Then, when the wicked have to remain silent, looking at the mountains and longing for them to fall on them and cover them, God, seeing that they are silent, will ask the apostles who by their preaching have worked on the exterior of the soul, and the angels, who by their inspirations have worked within it; Whose image is this? And they will have to reply; it is not that

of Caesar, but that of the prince of darkness. Depart, ye cursed, will be God's declaration of judgement, to the hell fire of him whose image you prefer to carry on you.

## SECTION VI. LITERARY AND HISTORICAL NOTES

### A: St Ambrose and Valentinian II

Among the most brilliant examples of a defender of the rights of the Church against the State figures that of St Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan. He gave one more proof of his character in his reply to the Emperor Valentinian II, who had ordered him to give up his cathedral to the Arians. Ambrose replied: We are commanded, Give up the basilica. I reply: It is not lawful for me to give it up, neither is it lawful for you, emperor, to receive it. On no account can you violate the sanctity of a private person's house, and do you wish to take over the house of God? It is said that for the emperor all is lawful, that all things are his. I reply: Do not take upon yourself the responsibility of thinking, O emperor, that you have any imperial rights over things which are divine.

### B: Thomas à Becket

One more instance of the conflict between the temporal and spiritual powers, this time in England. Thomas, chancellor of Henry II, had been named, by the express wish of the King, Archbishop of Canterbury. Loyal to the very depths of his soldier's heart, he fought strongly in defence of the rights of the Church, refusing to allow clerics to be judged by the civil courts. All the ministers of the Church, insisted the Primate, should be judged by the Church courts according to the Canons. Just as in Germany, there were bishops who were willing to temporize or come to terms with the King, and soon the Archbishop found that he had to flee to exile in France, to avoid the anger of the King. He returned to England, only to discover that there was no hope of a peaceful settlement. One of the King's ministers asked him: Who made you Archbishop? The Primate replied: My spiritual powers I hold from God and from my Lord, the Pope; my temporal goods at the hands of my Lord, the King! Therefore you do not admit that you have received everything from the King? replied the minister. No, was the answer; we must give the King what belongs to him, but to God what belongs to God.

The issue was clear, and given the character of the King, could have but one ending. Is there no one, he exclaimed, who will rid me of the insults of this turbulent priest? Imprudent and fatal words:

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soon acted upon. On the 29th of December four of the King's knights rode to Canterbury and burst into the Cathedral shouting: Where is the traitor? drawing their swords as they went. Here I am; Archbishop, and no traitor! When they tried to drag him from the church Thomas resisted, so they cut him down before the altar. Two years later the Pope raised him as a saint to the altars of the Church, testimony to his death as a martyr for God and the Church.

### C: The power of God above that of tyrants

Twenty years previously, at the moment when Palestine was annexed as part of the Roman Empire, another Galilean called Judas had solved this problem in the negative, and had perished with his followers. If Jesus took refuge in the famous Give to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's, it was for the simple reason that, in this drama which had been in preparation from the beginnings of eternity, it was not fitting that the Romans should play any other part save that of executioner. Israel would make use of Rome to sacrifice the victim, but the victim belonged primarily to her. Rome, in the person of Pilate, could find nothing against Jesus.

But, what is the limit to the rights of Caesar? Where do God's rights begin? Here we begin a debate without end. Until the very day when that phrase was uttered by a poor Jew on the eve of death, Caesar was divine and the gods belonged to the Empire more than the Empire to the gods. And now behold, erected outside and far above the power of any tyrant, the power of Him whom freed man will recognize as the one Lord of heaven and earth. Human conscience will continue to commit horrible crimes; but not because of that will it be any the less free from now onwards. Martyrdom can only affect the body, and all the power of the State will come to grief on the threshold of a saintly soul from century to century (François Mauriac, *Vie de Jésus*).

## SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### A: To God the things that are God's

##### i. *Religious duties:*

In his reply to the Pharisees Christ makes manifest the obligation every man has of paying cult to God. Men, Christians, have religious duties. It is not our wish at this moment to carry out a theological study of the virtue in question; but rather, based on the liturgy of this Sunday, to lay down a plan of religion for the good Christian.



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### 2. *To God the things that are God's:*

The last part of the Epistle is a commentary on this phrase; in those counsels of Paul we can see the characteristics of the true Christian and the religious man.

#### (a) Charity;

i. *may your love grow richer and richer yet. . . .* How many times St Paul stresses this!

ii. *it is the greatest of all the virtues*, the bond of perfection;

iii. *the apostle speaks directly of the love of God*, but as a consequence which cannot be separated from it our love for our neighbour must grow too (Gradual).

#### (b) Faith:

i. *in the fulness of its knowledge and the depths of its perception* (v. 9). These words refer to our faith and to the sharing which it gives us in the divine knowledge;

ii. *he asks for these two things at the same time because charity depends on faith, which is its basis*. Love increases the more we know of the beloved. A weak faith can never give rise to a strong love.

#### (c) Purity of life:

i. *so that you may learn to prize what is of value ; may nothing cloud your conscience or hinder your progress . . .* (v. 10). The greatest manifestation of charity is purity of life;

ii. *where there is a strong faith and burning love there is bound to be purity of life*, characteristics of the Christian, then, like the former.

#### (d) May you reap the full harvest. . . . Fruits!

Here we have the results, in this life and in the time of the harvest, namely good works, merits, glory\*.

### 3. *The glory of God:*

(a) St Paul sums up the whole programme in the final words of today's Epistle; to God's glory and praise. This is the end and purpose of the Christian's life; for this God made him and chose him (cf. Eph. I. 4-6).

(b) The better Christian, more devout, more pious, is the one who procures most glory\* for God in this life. To give God what belongs to him is to give him honour and glory; seeking his glory in all things.

### 4. *The Christian—a light:*

(a) Every Christian, by the very\* fact of being one, is bound to live in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Phil. 1. 27), or, which comes to the same thing, and using another phrase of the apostle, You must show yourselves innocent and single-minded,

God's children, bringing no reproach on his name. You live in an age that is twisted out of its true pattern, and among such people you shine out, beacons to the world, upholding the message of life (Phil. 2. 15). This is to give God the things that are his, those things which he demands of us.

(b) The Christian has to fulfil this programme in the midst of this generation which has been twisted out of its true pattern, as Paul puts it.

i. *if the world walks in darkness* there is even more obligation to be a light for its guidance;

ii. *St John Chrysostom puts it beautifully:* The stars shine at night, they give off their brilliance in the darkness; far from being lost in the darkness that surrounds them, they appear ever more brilliant. The same will be true of you if you remain just in the midst of those who are evil. Your light will shine with ever greater power.

iii. *St Augustine has a similar image:* Just as the stars follow the paths laid down for them by God, without ceasing to throw their light on the surrounding darkness ... so should the saints act. Those whose conversation is really in heaven are no more worried about what is said of them or done against them than are the stars.

#### 5. *For Christ:*

(a) This programme will be possible for every Christian through Jesus Christ:

Nor am I less confident, that he who has inspired this generosity in you will bring it to perfection, ready for the day when Jesus Christ comes (Phil. 1. 6). Christ began the work by meriting for us through his passion and death the graces and strength necessary for sanctity. He became the vine of which we are the branches, through the baptism we have received. Each year that passes increases that good work in us.

(b) Our own devices:

If we are left to them we produce nothing but sins and infidelities, which we must weep for with the psalmist, as in the Introit of today, and which we must pay for in terms of salutary penance and works of satisfaction, of which the Mass is one of the most important (Secret).

(c) We need Christ:

The Church, like another Esther, asks this for us in the Offertory. Each one of us, at the Mass of today, must lift up our hearts to God to ask him to make us a light in the world; that our faith and charity may increase; that we may live pure and undefiled, that in all things we may seek his glory. For that purpose we must give him all that we have and all that we are, both in soul and body.

## B: Piety and the Liturgy

### I. *Duties towards God:*

(a) In today's Gospel our Lord turns what appeared to be a purely political question into a religious one;

(b) the Christian has duties towards his nation, but he also has duties towards God.

### 2. *Piety:*

(a) Man owes this to God because all that he has received comes to him from God:

The life of man bears the image, the stamp, of God; both in his body and in his soul. Body and soul for God—to God the things that are his!

(b) He must pay cult to God and give him glory:

This homage is what we mean by piety. St Thomas has defined it by saying that it is the virtue which inclines us to pay homage to those who are the authors of our being. Therefore, in a special way, it is a virtue which inclines us to pay homage to God, our creator and the author of all that he possesses.

(c) The image:

Piety, then, is the image of praise, of glory and of thanksgiving which the rational creature offers to God.

### 3. *Practical notion of piety:*

(a) Clearly seen from what has been said:

It must be directed towards God and his praise, not egocentric;

(b) it cannot be reduced to examinations of conscience, meditations, or the cultivation of the moral virtues:

In true piety there must always be the prayer of adoration, of thanksgiving, of praise, the cultivation of the theological virtues.

(c) Therefore:

True piety must look at what God likes, not at that which pleases us.

### 4. *The liturgy:*

(a) A most excellent form of piety:

It is the official and public cult of the Church. In the liturgy it is not the individual man who pays his tribute, but the whole Church. It is the cult of Christ the head and his mystical Body in union with him. The prayer of Christ continued through the ages by his members.

(b) True piety, therefore, cannot prescind from the Mass, which is the centre and the essence of the liturgy, together with the sacraments:



Pius XII warns us that if private piety separates itself from the Mass it is bound to become sterile (*Mediator Dei*).

5. *Piety and devotions:*

(a) The liturgy in no way destroys the devotion—or the devotions—of the individual; that is clear from the same Encyclical, in which the Pope condemns any such ideas.

(b) These private acts of piety must not be swept away; on the contrary, they are to be recommended, as the Pope says. Meditation, examinations of conscience, retreats, etc. are true acts of piety.

(c) However, there is room for teaching the people that the liturgy can be a basis for their private as well as their public prayer. On many occasions their life of private piety is fed on books or devotions of little worth; at times these private devotions are multiplied and lead only to a tiring boredom rather than to spiritual profit.

(d) The liturgy can provide us with the most beautiful prayers, both in their form and their inner meaning.

i. it makes the prayer of thanksgiving easy; it asks for the things that are really necessary; it facilitates the prayer of adoration, etc.;

ii. it keeps the image of Christ alive before the Christian through the liturgical year; showing his virtues, etc.;

iii. it leads inevitably to a love for the Eucharist and the sacraments;

iv. increases devotion to the Holy Spirit; unites us with the Trinity.

(e) Pius XII says: It is most important that Christians should live a liturgical life and that through it they should increase and feed their supernatural spirit.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### The day of Christ

1. *The text of Paul:*

And this is my prayer for you; may your love grow richer and richer yet, in the fulness of its knowledge and the depths of its perception, so that you may learn to prize what is of value; may nothing cloud your conscience or hinder your progress till the day when Christ comes . . . (Phil. 1. 9-10).

(a) There is need for a deep knowledge in order to be ready for that day of Christ.

(b) Knowing in what that day consists will help us to understand the need for this knowledge.

2. *The day of Christ:*

St Paul, when he uses this phrase, gives it the meaning of the solemn coming of a great personage with his court about him; it is

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the solemn day in which Christ will reveal himself as he is, in his two natures, as God and man; in all his glory, to gather all things around him.

3. On that day the truth will be known to all ; but Christ is the truth ; his mission it was to give testimony to the truth and to restore all things to their former truth. Therefore, on the day of Christ two things will be made clear:

- i. the truth of Christ;
- ii. our truth.

### 4. *The truth of Christ:*

(a) The Christ who was despised and ill-treated will appear as the Lord, Redeemer, and the type to which every creature must conform.

(b) The surroundings of that day are meant merely to present Christ to us as the centre of all things. That is his truth, which he will present to all those who did not receive the light when it came first into the world (John 1. 5).

### 5. *Our truth:*

(a) The truth of things appears when we compare them with their model; therefore our truth will appear once we are compared with Christ. That which is not like him will be false and without any reality.

(b) St Paul uses another metaphor, when he says that the day of Christ will be that in which both the works and the sons of the light shall be saved (Rom. 13. 12 and 1 Thess. 5. 2-5). Indeed, it is light which shows up the truth of colour and of things.

i. then the truth will appear, because Christ will judge without respect of persons. It will not then be enough to have been a subject under his law', to have known the various acts of religion—it will be necessary' to have lived them ;

ii. because then only works will be judged, and judged by fire, to see if they are any use or if they are not;

iii. the apparently wise of this world will see the anger of God launched against them, because they imprisoned the truth (Rom. i. 18-20);

iv. the powerful ones of the earth will suffer their just reward;

v. there will be trouble and tribulation on all who have done evil;

vi. on the other hand, those who are of the truth because they have loved the works of truth, those whose works are true because they fulfilled the precept of doing all for and in Christ, they will see that their works follow them into the next life. They will know' that Christ is the truth and that this truth can and will give them eternal life.

6. The means to make sure that our works are found to be true in that day is the prayer of Paul, made our own (Phil. 1. 9).

### III. THE GOSPEL

#### A: Hypocrisy

##### 1. *Jesus and the Pharisees:*

(a) Master, we know well that thou art sincere . . . Matt. 22. 16:

- i. sincere because you teach in all sincerity the way of God
- ii. sincere because no one can convince you of sin (John 8. 46);
- iii. sincere because you are meek and humble of heart;
- iv. sincere because you came into the world to give testimony to the truth;
- v. sincere . . . much more than that; truth itself!

(b) You, on the other hand, O Pharisees, are hypocrites:

He says it who is truth itself. More than eleven times in all in the course of the Gospels—and not all has been written there:

- i. because your hearts are full of malice and poison, you come before Christ under the cloak of friendship and as admirers;
- ii. because you strain out a gnat and swallow a camel;
- iii. because you make clean the outside of the cup and plate but inside you are corrupt, full of malice and wickedness;
- iv. because you are like white-washed tombs, outside clean and bright, within full of the corruption of death.

##### 2. *Hypocrisy:*

(a) Christ defined it perfectly when he told the Pharisees that outwardly they appeared to men to be just, but within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

(b) That is hypocrisy in the moral order; to give the appearance of virtue while one is really a sinner; simulation of sanctity which one does not possess; to make a great show of false virtue (cf. St Thomas *in loco*).

##### 3. *The leaven of the Pharisees:*

(a) It is hypocrisy:

- i. With it they corrupted the simple people just as leaven corrupts the dough. The people who followed Christ admired and applauded him.
- ii. If the Pharisees had shown themselves as they really were, the people would have had nothing to do with them and would never have followed them. But they appeared as perfect observers of the law, just and saintly, and thus they were able to deceive the people.



## (b) Christ condemns them openly for it:

He tells them the story of the man who had two sons and who commanded them to go to work for him; one refused and then went to work; the other said that he would go but did not. He asks them the question: Which of the two did the will of the father? Obviously the first. Then Christ tells them that the harlots and the publicans shall sit in the kingdom before them.

## (c) He condemns them before his apostles:

When he tells them that they must listen to the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, because they are sitting on the chair of Moses, but they must not imitate their works, because they teach, and do not that which they teach. They lay heavy burdens on others, but do not lift a finger to help them carry those burdens (Matt. 23. 3-4).

4. *The sin of hypocrisy:*

## (a) It can be a mortal sin:

When it is a question of essential sanctity, that is, of sanctifying grace, and a man is not concerned with having it, but with appearing to have it, then according to St Thomas it is a mortal sin.

## (b) When it goes against the love of God or the neighbour:

When someone pretends to have charity in order to spread false doctrines, or attain some ecclesiastical dignity of which he is unworthy, or attain temporal goods, in which he places his whole end or purpose, then it is also a mortal sin.

(c) When the end in view is not opposed to charity it is a venial sin.

5. *Hypocrisy, sin against truth:*

(a) It implies a dissimulation—and all simulation is an act against truth, also against true Christian simplicity.

(b) That is why the hypocrite is never simple, his heart is always full of deceit.

6. *Hypocrisy is a daughter of pride:*

## (a) The proud man always seeks praise and adulation:

He knows that such praise can be given (and should only be given) on account of virtue; therefore he pretends to have it.

(b) The Pharisees, because of their pride, were also hypocrites:

They did all their good works so as to be seen by men, our Lord said it of them (Matt. 23. 5-8).

7. *With a right intention there can be no hypocrisy:*

(a) Frequently good people are worried lest they should be hypocrites:

That is a good sign, because this fear shows a good intention.

(b) There is no hypocrisy so long as there is:

- i. a sincere desire to reach perfection and sanctity;
- ii. when there is no express intention of pretending a sanctity which one does not possess, nor of deceiving others by such pretence.

8. *The hypocrisy of today:*

(a) Living by appearances:

We may say that there are many Christians who live by appearances and who cultivate these without any real interior spirit of piety; on the other hand, they may even be careless about the latter:

- i. they wish to be good and pious but without living the consequences of that desire;
- ii. they go to communion, perform other acts of devotion, alms-deeds, visits to the sick, etc.

(b) Good things in themselves, even great:

But they are small for the one who does them; they are only appearances, only means to an end:

- i. unless we fulfil all our obligations, especially those of justice and charity, it must be said of us as it was of the Pharisees, that we are whited sepulchres;
- ii. people try to combine the life of piety with injustice; they are even annoyed if one speaks to them of justice;
- iii. piety is united with luxurious living and a waste of money in too many idle pleasures, a thing which is an offence against the poor.

(c) To how many people of today could the harsh phrases of the Gospel be applied:

- i. let each examine his own conscience;
- ii. the threats of Christ against the Pharisees have a modern application—like the rest of the Gospel. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice . . .
- iii. our light must shine among men, it is true, but only so that they may praise and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

## B: Cunning

Cunning is wisdom used for evil ends

1. A new aspect of the malice of the Pharisees is shown in today's gospel, their cunning. They are wise; the prudent man is wise and so is the cunning man.

2. Ingenuity and industry to attain the end proposed and to lay hands on the means to attain it can be praiseworthy or blameworthy. That is why it is said of both the prudent and the astute that they are wise, ingenious, clever (St Thomas, *Ethics*, 1. 6. c. 10).

3. When one tries to attain an *evil end by the use of* means which are not true, but false, that is cunning; in fact, even though the end be a good one, if the means are *evil that, too, is cunning*.

4. *The* Pharisees are wise for evil purposes; they are cunning:

(a) as was the serpent when he deceived our *first* parents in the garden;

(b) to drag down the human race he hides his real intention and plays on the pride and vanity of Eve;

(c) the Pharisees are cunning, because they wish to trap Jesus and for that purpose make use of means which appear praiseworthy and good.

### The cunning of the Pharisees

1. It is clearly portrayed in today's Gospel. They wanted to ruin Jesus' mission; therefore they took counsel together to see how they could trap him in some way.

2. In other places we see the same thing; for example, in the case of the woman taken in adultery (John 8. 4-5); they present the case as one of interpretation of the law of Moses; their cunning hid their evil intention under the appearances of flattery and learning.

3. Finally, in the judicial process against Christ both in the house of Caiphas and again before Pilate, it becomes clear how they choose those means which are most efficacious to attain their end—the destruction of Jesus. They are not concerned with the truth; but with their evil purposes. They do not tell the Roman procurator that they condemn Christ for claiming to be the Son of God, but present him as an evil-doer, a revolutionary, contradicting Caesar, etc. They even try to impress Pilate by saying: We have no king but Caesar.

### The malice of cunning

1. *In what does it consist? because it rules in the hearts of many:*

(a) But when it is discovered then even men disapprove of it: the cunning man is lowered in the eyes of his fellows.

(b) The action of Saul, for example, who pretended to give his daughter in marriage to David, but in reality was looking for a chance to put his life in peril, condemned by all.

(c) The man who to our face praises us, shows himself kind to us and understanding of our problems, and then behind our backs does all he can to do us harm, is not a good man.

2. *Characteristics of its evil:*

(a) Evil in itself:

i. *it is against prudence*; prudence means rectitude of intention<sup>†</sup>, cunning is lies and deceit;

ii. *prudence seeks a good end*; cunning an evil one, or at least it mixes with a good end evil means;

iii. *for that reason it is always a sin*.

(b) evil because of the means it employs:

Guile, fraud; this goes against true Christian simplicity and rightness of intention.

(c) evil because it is at the service of evil:

i. it does not serve good but evil; he who first made use of it did so in order to introduce sin into the -world;

ii. it is usually at the service of man's evil desires, vices and sentiments. It is the efficacious instrument of pride, envy, lust, avarice;

iii. the cunning man shows the interior vice which has possession of his heart. Just as the Pharisees showed their evil intention and envy.

### The Scriptures condemn this cunning

To take but one quotation, St Paul says:

The serpent beguiled Eve with his cunning; -what if your minds should be corrupted, and lose that innocence which is yours in Christ? (2 Cor. 11. 3).

### Be simple and prudent

1. *The true Christian must flee from cunning:*

There are abundant texts in the New Testament which recommend simplicity and prudence and the avoiding of cunning and deceit.

(a) Christ told his disciples: You must be wary, then, as serpents, and yet innocent as doves (Matt. 10. 16).

(b) You must put aside, then, every trace of ill-will and deceitfulness, your affectations, the grudges you bore, and all the slanderous talk; you are children new-born and all your craving must be for the soul's pure milk, that will nurture you into salvation . . . (1 Pet. 2. 1-2).

2. *The admonition of St Paul:*

Every Christian, but especially the apostle, the priest, must pay attention to this: Being entrusted, then, by God's mercy with this ministry, we do not play the coward; we renounce all shamefaced concealment, there must be no crooked ways, no falsifying of God's word; it is by making the truth publicly known that we recommend ourselves to the honest judgement of mankind, as in God's sight (2 Cor. 4. 1-2).



## Beware of the cunning man

*Cunning in the world:*

(a) The world is full of it:

It is under the rule of the devil, who is the father of lies and cunning.

(b) His way of acting is the same today as yesterday:

Then it was the serpent; today it is the world. It is the men who live in the world, who live off the world and make it up. Guard yourselves against them.

(c) It is generally used:

- i. by false friends; protestations of affection which are not true;
- ii. for the end of lust and vice;
- iii. in business; politics etc.

(d) They will usually not present sin to you openly:

They will use cunning and deceit.

(e) Watch, then, and live with your eyes open:

- i. try to get to know people, their way of acting, etc.;
- ii. try to get to know their intentions to avoid being deceived;
- iii. above all watch and pray, fill yourselves with the spirit of Christ, of truth, simplicity and prudence;
- iv. grow in Christ and his love . . . we are no longer to be children, no longer to be like storm-tossed sailors, driven before the wind of each new doctrine that human subtlety, human skill in fabricating lies, may propound. We are to follow the truth, in a spirit of charity, and so grow up, in everything, into a due proportion with Christ, who is our head (Eph. 4. 14-15).

## C: Submission to authority

I. *We must treat from time to time of this theme:*

(a) It is demanded by our fidelity to the papal teachings;

(b) by the desire to offer some ideas concerning the foundation of a new social order;

(c) by the demand of Pius XII that we should work for a better world.

2. *The weakness of the principle of authority and its consequences:*

A fundamental question; in matters of civilization all questions which affect the principle of obedience to the constituted authority are fundamental, especially the obedience and respect necessary towards constituted authority. If these are weak or missing, then the road to social chaos is wide open.

3. *Towards a better world:*

(a) The problem must be faced:

If we are to build a new civilization we cannot prescind from the problem, however intricate and difficult, of submission to the public authorities.

i. the tendency should be to reform the principle of authority, so weak in modern society.

ii. in any conflict between liberty and public authority today, the common good demands that our support should be given to authority, if only to save the essential liberties of the human person from turning into licence.

(b) We must do this with the help of the highest authorities:

i. *the doctrine of the Popes:* We must admit that they saw the problem in its very beginnings; they laid down basic principles which should be applied and were applied at every time and place, to the particular aspects of this problem as they arose;

ii. *this is especially true* of the great social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI and XII;

iii. *the principles outlined in them should be carefully studied and put into practice.* Above all we should remember that they had no interest in any particular political party; they are above party politics—and so should those principles be. Rather -we might say that they should be common ground for all political parties, no matter what their special orientation may be.

(c) A new social order:

Only by this careful study and application can the -world create a new social order, a better world, in fact.

4. *Leo XIII:*

(a) There is no need to spend much time in a portrait of this great Pope, nor is there need to insist on his special qualifications for the task to which he turned his keen mind.

(b) His doctrine about submission to authority has the greatest authority for many reasons :

i. he dealt with the whole question expressly in many documents addressed to the universal Church and to particular nations;

ii. he explains the fundamental principles most clearly—more clearly than anyone before or since;

iii. he is correct and precise in his applications of those principles to special problems;

iv. his doctrine is a faithful echo of that of Christ, the early Christians, the Fathers of the Church and his predecessors, especially Gregory XVI;

v. his successors have approved and followed up his teachings.



5. *The weakening of authority:*

For Leo XIII, the foundations of the ruin of our social order lie in the weakening of authority which came from the heretics of the later Middle Ages, the principles of the French Revolution and the teaching (and practice) of the Masons. Those three great enemies laid the foundations of the modern spirit of freedom from authority, foundations of many modern states.

His prophecies were fulfilled, which increases his authority as a teacher:

i. no one in his day would have thought it possible that, all too soon, great nations, kings and princes in Europe, would be destroyed. But he saw it coming.

ii. let us remember that, as late as the reign of Queen Victoria, there were many great politicians who thought that the world—England at least—had reached the maximum in the consolidation of political and social policy. The same could be said of certain rulers in Europe. They would not recognize their world if they saw it today; but Leo XIII would, because he said that it would lead to ruin.

6. *Social modernism :*

The authority of Leo has received solemn acclaim by the great Encyclical of Pius XI, *Ubi arcano Dei*. He points out:

(a) That there are many who profess to follow Catholic doctrine in regard to social order and discipline . . . ;

(b) yet these, in their statements, writings, etc., act as if the principles laid down by the Popes, especially by Leo XIII, Pius X, and Benedict XV, had lost their original force and meaning.

(c) In this we must admit a certain moral modernism, juridical and social, against which we protest strongly, together with dogmatic modernism.

7. *A double advice:*

(a) Study these great encyclicals closely and apply them in practice; only one who has the charge of a universal Church can understand these problems in all their aspects.

(b) It is most important not to concentrate too much on the past when explaining these doctrines; that is past—the future lies ahead, and we must make something of it. We shall only do that if we allow ourselves to be guided by the infallible voice of the Vicar of Christ—so often excluded from conferences, treaties, etc. One day the world will wake up to the fact that the Popes have only the real good of society' at heart. We can help to stimulate that idea and bring it to the knowledge of all those who are working for a new social order, for the better of mankind and the common good.



## D: The Pendulum

### 1. *The teaching of the Popes:*

It is always one and the same—a continuous line of doctrine.

(a) It has been said that the doctrine of the Popes followed a kind of pendulum movement, *i.e.* that accommodated their teaching to the various political situations of their time. Cardinal Ottaviani took up this objection and dealt with it firmly in a conference given in 1953 in the Pontifical Athenaeum in the Lateran.

(b) He pointed out, to take one example, the Encyclical *Immortale Dei* of Leo XIII, in which he condemns at least on ten occasions the so-called right to rebel.

(c) He then goes on to show that this same doctrine is treated in the same fashion in the writings of Pius XI and Pius XII. The reason? It is not admissible in the light of Catholic principles. Therefore there is one and the same teaching from them all.

### 2. *Pius XI:*

(a) In the Encyclical we have mentioned in the previous scheme, he condemns those who write and act as though the great doctrines of former Popes had now fallen into disfavour or were now useless. He calls this theory moral, juridical and social modernism, equally to be condemned with the doctrinal modernism attacked by Pius X.

(b) What is more, in *Divini Redemptoris*, Pius XI explicitly reminds his readers of the social teachings of Leo XIII, all of which he approves and confirms, especially those of the two great Encyclicals *Diuturnum Illud* and *Immortale Dei*.

(c) It is not true, he says, that all have equal rights in civil society and that there is no legitimate hierarchy there. He then quotes Leo XIII.

(d) This doctrine of the Catholic Church, he says later, brings into harmony the rights and duties of authority -with those of the liberty of the subject and his dignity in the State; the personality of the subject with the superior power of authority in his superior, and therefore the due subjection of one to the other.

### (c) Violence never allowed:

The encyclical *Firmissimam constantiam* of 1937, directed to the Bishops of Mexico, points out that, while at one and the same time they all have a duty to denounce, with all the strength at their command, injustice, no matter from whence it comes, at the same time they must be most careful not to condone any type of violent rebellion against authority, not even in order to protect the dignity of the human person.

### 3. *The truth does not vary:*

This is proved by the very brief historical summary of these two Popes.

(a) It is an apologetic argument of great value. The Chair of Peter is the Chair of truth and its doctrine does not vary any more than does the truth.

(b) In the practical order there has been no change in the papal teaching from the days of Pius VI to those of Pius XII, in one of the most difficult periods of all political history. If Catholics, instead of following part}' politics, had insisted on the doctrines of the Popes, things might have taken a very different turn and we might not have been faced with the present period of crisis.

(c) It puts us in a very strong position when faced with the various types of social revolution.

i. we defend any just vindication of rights; we condemn in the most severe terms all the social injustice of our times;

ii. but we do not condone or admit that the masses should take justice into their own hands, and that, instead of making use of their constitutional rights under the regime in which they live, they should take refuge in rebellion and revolt;

iii. even if it were not illicit, sane reason would never advise such a course, because sedition is not usually the solution to major problems.

## E: Thesis and Hypothesis

### Doctrinal principles

1. If it is true—as it is—that the power of the civil authority comes from God, then the State can profess one religion.

2. If there is one true religion, then the State must, of obligation, profess that religion.

3. When this supreme civil authority, through the men who represent it and constitute it, are certain with regard to any truth which has relation with their subjects, authority must then impose the practical consequences which are derived from that truth.

### The State and truth

#### i. *Truth in general:*

(a) The State imposes, in a collective manner, certain obligations, in the order of public health, vaccination, etc., elementary education, taxes;

(b) the State has certain criteria for doing this; she acts in the name of the common good which she represents.

#### 2. *Religious truth:*

If there is one true religion, the State must know it.

She must act accordingly:

i. *with regard to God* ; recognizing his existence and the cult necessary as a consequence ;

ii. *with regard to the Church.* If the custody of that religion has been given to one sole Church, then the State has the obligation of admitting that Church as the one, true guardian of divine revelation.

iii. *with regard to the citizens.* The State cannot impose one collective religion on them all, because faith is an internal act and something spontaneous. But she can avoid danger to the faith and morals of the people; promote the faith and protect morality; command that the true faith should be taught in her schools.

3. *Cardinal Ottaviani says:*

If there is one truth which cannot be denied among the general principles of Ecclesiastical Public Law it is this; that any State which is made up predominantly of Catholics and governed by Catholics, has the duty of forming her legislation in a Catholic sense. This implies three immediate consequences:

(a) the public and not merely the private profession of the religion of the nation;

(b) Christian inspiration in the legislature of the country;

(c) defence of the religious patrimony of the country against any assault which might attack the rights of that patrimony, with the threat of taking away the treasury of the faith or her religious peace.

4. *We defend, with the cardinal, the thesis as it is laid down in the papal documents:*

(a) But the thesis cannot be applied in all countries; there are countries which live in the state of hypothesis; in which the majority of the citizens do not profess the Catholic religion. It would be illogical, as we have said, to impose it on them, either collectively or individually. The State cannot profess, as a State, a religion in which the majority of its subjects do not believe.

(b) But it is also illogical to impose on a State in which the vast majority of people are Catholics, rules which apply to a State in the condition of hypothesis.

5. *The rights of the truth:*

To reply to a normal objection let us allow Cardinal Ottaviani to speak for himself:

(a) Two series of weights and measures?

But now we must solve another difficulty, at first sight so specious that it has no solution. It is objected: But you have two criteria or norms of action according to your own convenience. In Catholic countries you maintain the idea of a confessional state, with the duty of giving exclusive protection to the Catholic religion. On the other hand, when you are in the minority, you claim tolerance and liberty of religion. You have two weights and measures, from which those Catholics who are aware of the situation would long to free themselves.



(b) Truth and error cannot have the same rights:

It is quite true that there must be two systems of weights and measures, one for the truth and the other for error.

*With regard to truth and justice:* Those who know themselves to be in possession of right and truth cannot abandon that. We must demand the full recognition of our rights. Those who do not have this feeling, how can they claim an exclusive favour, while denying the rights of those who base their claims on other principles ?

6. *Equality of cult and freedom of religion:*

(a) The problem is a result of the simultaneous existence of many sects ; a logical consequence of the opinion of those who think that religion should not be dogmatic and that only the conscience of the individual should be the norm for the profession of faith and cult. But, in the countries which profess this belief, why should not the Catholic Church take advantage of these principles and claim those rights granted her by law ?

(b) She would prefer to make her claim in the name and with the authority of God, but those States do not recognize her exclusive claim. Therefore she is content to make that claim in the light of the principle of tolerance and the legislation which, in such countries, grants equal rights to all.

## F: The payment of tribute

1. *General principle :*

The laws which are just in this matter of payment of taxes oblige all subjects in conscience.

(a) The example of Christ:

When he was shown the coin of the tribute he said: Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's. What he taught in words he confirmed by his example, when he told Peter to pay the tribute for them both.

(b) This is also the teaching of St Paul (Rom. 13. 5-7):

In his words we can see that the apostle teaches us two things:

- i. tribute must not merely be paid on the grounds of fear of punishment, but also as something pertaining to the conscience of each one ;
- ii. that it has to be paid because the rulers are God's ministers.

2. *This is a duty of social justice:*

(a) The public authority represents the common good of all and serves that good.

(b) This common good demands that society should be organized in such a way that it offers the individual all that he needs for the full perfection of his life in every department, social, moral, intellectual, etc.

(c) This will demand an expensive public service, for which the citizens will have to pay.

(d) Public authority can demand from the citizens all that is necessary to see to it that this organization is properly established.

(e) Therefore it is a public duty to co-operate loyally in such schemes, in order to put in order all that the common good demands from the State and public officials. In this sense the payment of taxes is a most important element in the public duty of the citizen.

(f) Catholic moral theology has never looked with favour on the evasion of taxes by the more important and wealthy groups in the nation.

### 3. *Taxes and share in benefits:*

Taxes may be a method of ensuring that all have an equal share in the productive benefits of a nation.

(a) This share, as is well known, can take place at any one of three moments:

- i. in the fixing of wages;
- ii. in the distribution of the income of a factory or business;
- iii. when fixing taxation.

(b) One cannot lay down as of obligation in Catholic moral theology that there should be a large wage share out, a just share in benefits, nor that there should be a distribution of profits in the business or company—even though the Popes have advised this. But if this just share has not been granted in these two phases of public life, then the State has the obligation of seeing to it that it is done in the last stages, that of taxation.

### 4. *In this matter we may establish certain general principles:*

(a) Laws of taxation normally oblige in conscience.

(b) The rule laid down by the Popes advises that the State should be moderate in its demands; therefore we must conclude that the modern plan followed by most nations of exorbitant increase in taxation and budgets is not inspired by Christian principles and may lead to a modification in the former principle laid down.

(c) There should be not merely moderation in taxation, but also justice in administration and sharing these taxes.

(d) The citizens have the right to intervene in the laws of tribute and budgets.

(e) They also have the duty and right to exact accounts from the State as to the way their money is spent.

(f) It is entirely wrong to allow the citizens themselves to judge whether a tax law is unjust or not! The reason should be obvious!

- i. There is an obligation of obeying them if they are not openly unjust;
- ii. they are openly unjust if they come in conflict with a superior law to the civil code.

### G: Moderation in taxation

1. It is enough to take a look at modern States and their budgets to see that they have fallen out of line from the true Christian concept of life.

(a) There is a relation between the dignity' of the human person and the ownership of property; and at the same time another relation between the dignity<sup>5</sup> and liberty of the subject and excessive taxation.

(b) When the State rakes a disproportionate amount from the income of the citizens it may be said that the personality<sup>7</sup> of the latter is decreased; that the State is invading unduly the life of the citizen.

i. This phenomenon is a result of socialization in modern life;

ii. this is not surprising, because from the time of Leo XIII the Popes have insisted in asking for moderation in the State's interference in the life of the individual and in taxation too.

#### 2. *The State for the individual:*

Basic notion of the Encyclicals:

(a) The State is for the individual, not the individual for the State.

(b) The State should help individual action and activity, not substitute itself for it (cf. *Rerum Novarum*).

3. It is well known that Leo XIII considered it essential for the prosperity of any nation that it should increase the numbers of small landowners. In this territory', according to the Pope, the State has two missions:

(a) to increase the possibility of savings;

(b) extend the ownership of property<sup>7</sup> as far as possible.

(c) But this can only be done efficiently if the State does not impose too many<sup>7</sup> taxes on private ownership.

#### 4. *The mind of Pius XI:*

(a) Puts a brake on the intervention of the State in private affairs, saying that the higher authority should not take on to itself something which can be done at a lower level.

(b) In the matter of taxation he takes up the same position as Leo XIII.

(c) He defends private enterprise and small business against exaggerated State intervention.

#### 5. *The doctrine of Pius XII is in perfect accord with that of his predecessors:*

(a) He warns the human race, in his great Christmas Message of 1952, of the dangers of too much State intervention, which has reached the point of taking away man's personality from him.



(b) He defends savings, from the personal and the national points of view—but excessive taxation may make it impossible.

6. *A definite guide:*

As usual in all these big questions the Church is clear and definite. She wishes to promote private enterprise, the initiative of the individual, give the human personality its due expression within a social and political sphere which will help, not hinder, this development.

(a) The intervention of the State must be greater in our day than formerly; but not as much as it is;

(b) there is too much socialization and State control:

(c) the immediate consequence of this is over-taxation. There is need for a new policy, a new orientation.

## H: State and the Press

1. *The relation between public authority and the press:* A theme which is very much of our day:

(a) Freedom of the press:

Our time has known a press which is more free than ever before; which has caused untold harm to our civilization in more ways than one:

i. it has destroyed the Christian conscience, inheritance of our ancestors;

ii. it has cast down our old institutions, sources of so much control and restraints.

(b) It has also been an element of culture, of education:

It has done much to explain modern advances in science and education.

(c) The great daily newspapers have become a means for forming public opinion:

i. but at the same time it ought to reflect, not form, public opinion—this it seldom does;

ii. the strangling of public opinion is an offence against public morality and ethics; against the natural rights of man;

iii. this creates a serious modern problem.

2. *The press as a semi-public institution:*

(a) Private in part:

i. *in so far as it is owned by private individuals*, created for the individuals, not for the State;

ii. *it is a social instrument*, representing public opinion—provided it is not too much influenced by the advertisements it carries! Or rather, the policy of the advertisers.

(b) Public in part also:

It is directly related to the common good, because governments need the press, and because the press can prejudice actions of the authorities and even the gravest national interests.

(c) The double aspect:

It is this double aspect of the press which makes the juridical problems related with it so difficult.

3. *The press and the government:*

There should be a close relationship between them; the press should help the government:

(a) in that sense it should inform the citizens of the policy of the government and be the organ of communication between the government and the people;

(b) it should inform the government of the state of public opinion and be almost a representative of the people with the government;

(c) practise a criticism of laws and general policy which is just and objective, prudent, constructive and benevolent;

(d) defend the national interests abroad ;

(e) be a means of drawing together peoples of various nations in peace and good will.

4. *The press and the Church:*

(a) The Catholic press has a special duty to perform towards the Church ;

(b) it should be the organ which can bring to the people the voice of their bishops and the Holy See ;

(c) defender of the Church against her enemies;

(d) defender of morality when it is open to attack;

(e) contribute to form in the Church a body of public opinion; be an organ for helping to bring about better relations between Catholics of different countries.

5. *The soul of the press:*

(a) This is to be found, not in buildings, great machinery, etc., but in those who read it and those who write it.

(b) Reporters, the basis of a good press, have to be, according to Pius XII :

i. men who are really aware of their great responsibility;

ii. men of personality, who know how to awaken the best sentiments in people;

iii. men who think of the world, of their fellow men, of society, in the light of the great natural principles which are its foundation.

6. *Government and the press:*

(a) Even though the press is a social institution the government must know how to use it and how to guard it wisely.

(b) The government must be able to exact from the press guarantees that:

- i. it will serve the common good; watching the capital which runs the newspapers, to make sure that it is truly national;
- ii. limit—always with prudence—the so-called freedom of the press;
- iii. not allow the press to form public opinion in such a way that it will go against faith or morals, so far as possible: this is a delicate point;
- iv. use it as an instrument for the instruction of the people.

#### 7. *Conclusions:*

Three recommendations in the name of God and the Church.

(a) There should be a study of the problems of the press so as to create something which as yet does not exist in the world; a juridical system to govern the press which is fitted to modern conditions.

(b) Capitalists might think of investing some of their money in a good press.

(c) Eminent writers could do no better service to God and the Church than dedicate some of their time and brains to the direction of the daily press.

## I: The right to educate

### 1. *Divini illius magistri:*

A document which should be studied.

### 2. *The end of education and its essence:*

#### (a) Its end:

The end of education should be the formation of a man as he should be in order to attain the end for which God has created him. There can be no true education which is not adjusted to this end. And since Christ is the way, the truth and the life, there can be no true education which is not Christian.

#### (b) The end of Christian education:

To co-operate with divine grace so as to form a perfect Christian, that is to say, Christ himself.

#### (c) A man of character:

In modern language we might say that education has for its main purpose the formation of a complete man, a complete character in every sense of the -word.

### 3. *The subject of education:*

(a) The whole man, body and soul, with all his natural faculties and his supernatural qualities, just as he is known to us by human reason and by divine revelation;



(b) a man fallen from his primitive state of original justice but redeemed by Christ.

4. *Whose task is it to educate?*

- (a) It is primarily a social, not an individual obligation.
- (b) Pius XII says that there are three societies involved in this matter, harmoniously united by God; two of natural origin, the family and society; the third the Church, of supernatural origin.
  - i. Therefore education is rhe task of the family, *of the* Church and *of the civil society*'.
  - ii. The ideal is that these three should go hand in hand in the education of children.
  - iii. The ideal is that these three should form one integral citizen of heaven and *of the* State.

5. *Primarily the duty of education falls on the family:*

- (a) Its right in this matter is of the natural law, *given immediately* by God to the parents.
- (b) It is a right which no one can take away from the family;
- (c) but it has its limits, since the family forms part of the natural order, and therefore comes under its laws. Consequently, in the case when the family does not provide suitable education for the children, the State has the right to step in, but only provided *it respects the* rights of the parents in *every case*.

6. *The Church:*

- (a) As a perfect societ}' in her own right, she has always defended the rights of the parents to educate their children ;
- (b) at the same time she lays down principles *of doctrine* and morals on which the parents should act;
- (c) she insists that children *of Catholic parents* should attend Catholic schools; also that she has rhe *right to* own and run *such schools*, appoint the teachers, etc.

7. *The State:*

- (a) has the right to see to it that parents do their duty and also the obligation *of* providing them with the necessary means to carry out that duty.
- (b) She also has the right to see to it that teachers are properly trained and fully capable of doing their task well.
- (c) She can insist on certain basic elements in teaching, such as social doctrines, for the perfect formation of her future *citizens, etc.*
- (d) However, she cannot insist on a monopoly of educational institutions and methods, especially against the rights of parents and the Church.

*Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost*

THE RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER  
OF JAIRUS

SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Philippians, 3. 17-4. 3. Gospel: Matthew 9. 18-26 (Cf. Mark 5. 21-43 Luke, 8. 40-56)

Some texts concerning death

I. *It came into the world because of sin:*

Thou mayest eat thy fill of all the trees in the garden except the tree which brings knowledge of good and evil; if ever thou eatest of this, thy doom is death. Gen. 2. 16-17.

Still thou shalt earn thy bread with the sweat of thy brow, until thou goest back into the ground from which thou wast taken; dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Gen. 3. 19.

Through a woman sin first began; such fault was hers, we all must die for it. Ecclus. 25. 33.

. . . and yet we see death reigning in the world from Adam's time to the time of Moses, over men who were not themselves guilty of transgressing a law as Adam was . . . And if death began its reign through one man, owing to one man's fault, more fruitful still is the grace. Rom. 5. 14, 17.

Sin offers death for wages; God offer us eternal life as a free gift, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 6. 23.

A man had brought us death, and a man should bring us resurrection from the dead; just as all have died with Adam, so with Christ all will be brought to life. 1 Cor. 15. 21-22. Cf. Eph. 2. 5; James 1. 15.

2. *It is bitter—or sweet:*

Why should they see the light, that groan to see it; why should they live, that must live in bitterness of soul ? Why should they long for death, like treasure-seekers, a grave the prize they covet? Job 3. 20-22.

Out upon thee, death, how bitter is the thought of thee to a man that lives at ease in his own home, a man untroubled by care, no difficulties in his path, that his food still relishes! Hail, death!



550 TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Welcome is thy doom to a man that is in need and lacks vigour; worn out with age and full of anxieties, that has no confidence left in him, no strength to endure. Eccclus. 41. 1-4. Cf. Jerem. 20. 14, 17-18; Jonas 4. 3.

3. *We must all die one day:*

Brief, brief are man's days; thou kcepest count of the months left to him, thou dost appoint for him the bounds he may not pass. . . . For us mortal men, death; a stripping, and a breathing out of the soul, and all is over. Job 14. 5, 10.

Where is the man that can live on, and leave death untasted; can ransom his life from the power of the world beneath? Ps. 88. 49.

Men are born only to die.. . . Eccles. 3. 2. Cf. 8. 8; 9. 5.

Man's destiny is to die once for all; nothing remains after that but judgement. Heb. 9. 27.

4. *Its coming is uncertain as to the hour:*

Be sure of this; if the master of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch, and not allowed his house to be broken open. And you, too, must stand ready; the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him. Matt. 24. 43-44. Cf. Luke 12. 40.

You are keeping it clearly in mind, without being told, that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 1 Thess. 5. 2. Cf. James 4. 16.

5. *Premature death in youth:*

Not so the innocent; though he should die before his time, rest shall be his. . . . Divine favour, divine love banished him from a life he shared with sinners; caught him away before wickedness could pervert his thoughts, before wrong-doing could allure his heart; . . . With him, early achievement counted for long apprenticeship; so well the Lord loved him, from a corrupt world he would grant him swift release. Wis. 4. 7, 10, 13-14.

6. *Mourning for the dead:*

At that, David rent his garments, and so did all the men who were with him; mourned they and wept, and fasted till evening came for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the Lord's people, men of Israel's race, that lay fallen in battle. 2 Kings 1.11-12. Cf. *ibid.* 3. 32.

When the Lord saw her, he had pity on her, and said, Do not weep. Luke 7. 13.

And Jesus, when he saw her in tears, and the tears of the Jews who accompanied her, sighed deeply and distressed himself over it; . . . Then Jesus wept. John 11. 33-34.

Stephen was buried by devout men, who mourned greatly over him. Acts. 8. 2. Cf. 9. 39.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

## I. LITURGICAL

i. *The idea of confidence in God:*

In the commentary on the previous Sunday's Mass we have said that many authors see a connection between these later Sundays after Pentecost; parts of the Mass are connected with the previous Sundays and others parts look ahead to those which are still to come. All bear a relation to the great Coming of Christ which will be the theme of the last Sunday.

The words of the Introit, apart from giving us the general theme of the Mass of today, also point back, almost as a reply, to the Introit of two Sundays ago. Then it was a plea for mercy: If thou, O Lord shalt observe iniquities, Lord, who shall endure it? Now it is: I have thoughts of peace, not of affliction . . . you shall invoke my aid and I will hear you. All the parts of the Mass join in this idea of confidence in God. Indeed, the image of the merciful God must be deeply engraven on the minds of the faithful. Who and what could call us up from the depths of our despair and discouragement at the thought of our sins? Only Christ and the thought of his mercy; Christ who has thoughts of peace!

The Gospel scenes are well fitted to instil this confidence into us; the daughter of Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood; two figures in the scene who trusted implicitly in Christ and were not deceived. With them, we also must have confidence because if Jesus is merciful and kind with the sick of body, he is even more so with the sick of soul. The omnipotence and the love of God are the two great motives for our confidence.

The Epistle leads us towards a more universal and complete confidence; confidence in our own resurrection. Augustine says that, in the miracles of Christ, we must look for the symbolic as well as the real element. The resurrection of the daughter of Jairus is a symbol of Christ raising the whole human race from death.

All the other parts of the Mass bear a relation to this idea of confidence. We must have trust in the Lord, even in the midst of our sins (Prayer, versicle and Offertory), in time of temptation (Gradual) and in all our needs (Communion).

2. *The conversion of the Jews at the end of time:*

The former remarks would be incomplete were we to omit an idea common among the liturgists of the Middle Ages. Then a different Epistle and Gospel were read; the Epistle was taken from Jeremias 23. 5-8 There we read: The living God will be one who rescued Israel and brought them home from the north country, and from all the places of exile he had once designed for them, to



live in their own land again. Inspired by this passage the ancient liturgists saw in today's Mass the idea of the conversion of the Jews at the end of time. In this sense they interpreted the various parts of the Mass.

Although this idea seems less practical than the former, we need not put it aside altogether, because it is not alien to the liturgy of today, even though the Epistle and Gospel have been changed, because the woman with the issue of blood could represent the Gentiles, while the daughter of Jairus stands for the people of Israel. In any case, the idea could easily be that our confidence is so universal that it does not exclude the Jews, rather it ought to include them. One day, before the end of time, Christ will say to them, as he did to the daughter of the ruler: Arise.

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Philippians 3. 17-4. 3

For the introduction and argument of this letter we refer our readers to the comments already made on the previous Sunday. Now we continue this reading, with the end of chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4.

#### i. *Texts:*

(a) Be content, brethren, to follow my example . . .

We have only one real model, Christ; but after him it is also useful to have the example of his chosen ones, those who, having been themselves illuminated by the Holy Spirit, are a light to the others. That is why the apostles always call to the minds of the priests and bishops of the flock the need to give good example. Cf. 1 Tim. 4. 12; Tit. 2. 7; i Pet. 5. 3.

(b) there are many whose lives make them the enemies of Christ's cross . . .

Who are these? In Paul's mind first of all those who tried to win his converts back to Jewish ways; but then also all those whose lives are a living contradiction of the Gospel.

(c) Perdition is the end that awaits them, their own hungry bellies are the god they worship . . .

There is no need to insist more on this theme; Galatians, chap. 5. 19-21 gives a vivid description of these sins.

(d) whereas we find our true home in heaven . . .

Here is the antithesis; the Christian mentality looks above, to heaven. Paul's idea is to present us with a capital city, heaven, whose riches reach us even here below and towards which we are directing our whole lives.

One day we will live there ; but what is the obstacle which prevents us from reaching that goal here and now? And what is required in order to reach it one day ?

The weakness of our mortal bodies prevents us; but we have confidence in the Saviour who will one day destroy the triple death which binds us down. He will reform this body of ours, making it like his own. Then we shall obtain the fullness of redemption. When that day comes the Word and the Father will make all things subject to Christ, crushing some, like death ; lifting up others and associating them with the glory of Christ.

(e) Then, O my brethren, so greatly loved and longed for . . .

The final part of the letter begins. The call to Evodia and Syntyche to patch up their differences is something which applies even in our day!

## 2. *The lesson:*

The main idea of this passage is encouragement and a call upon all to remember the real purpose in life, that of citizens of heaven. We are true citizens, with the corresponding rights and obligations. Resist the temptations of the senses, live according to God and wait with hope for the moment when we shall attain total peace in Christ—that is the programme set before us by Paul here and in other places (cf. 2 Cor. 5. 1-10).

## B: The Gospel: Matthew 9. 18-26

### Situation and argument

The miracle took place at the time when our Lord had not yet begun to declare openly the messianic character of his mission, which is the reason why he did not wish for too much publicity to be given to it, especially in Capharnaum. According to St Luke, more careful in his chronology, the scene took place after the short rest on the other side of the lake, after the calming of the tempest. St. Mark adds details not mentioned by St Matthew.

The multitude was waiting for Christ, who took the opportunity to preach to them. No sooner had his preaching come to an end than one of the rulers of the synagogue came to him, a man of influence and one who might easily have known the Roman centurion, who had already obtained the cure of his servant. For that reason he now dares to ask our Lord for the cure of his daughter.

While they were on the way to his house a woman draw's near who had an issue of blood, a legal impurity. It is not to be wondered at that she had wasted all her money on doctors, because apart from the legal difficulty of uncleanness in the treatment of such a case, there was the other one of the absurd remedies—twelve in all—laid down by the Jewish law. Some of these were ridiculous in the



extreme, others very expensive. The medical profession at the time was in such bad odour that the Mishna could say: The best of doctors should go to hell!

The poor woman, obviously ashamed of her illness and not wishing for any publicity, drew near quietly and touched the white fringe streaked with blue which every good Jew wore on the hem of his tunic, hoping that our Lord would never notice it. She was right in her confidence in him; wrong when she thought that she would be able to pass unnoticed. The Lord called her before all the crowd. We shall see his reasons later.

There has been a great deal of speculation about the identity of this woman. For St Ambrose, she was Martha—we do not know for what reason. Eusebius says that he saw a statue in Philippi of a woman kneeling in supplication before a man, who was Christ. The Acts of Pilate identify her with Veronica. These speculations led to the identification of the daughter of the ruler with the Jews and this woman representing the Gentiles.

While our Lord was talking to her the ruler learnt of the death of his daughter and the messengers warned him at the same time not to bother our Lord any longer. It was too late. Christ, however, tells the father to have confidence.

There was a great deal of noise in the house of the ruler; the professional mourners were already at work, even to extent of playing the flute—as was becoming to the ruler's rank and office.

According to Maldonatus, the reason why the Lord insisted that the girl was asleep was to avoid the uncomfortable publicity we have already mentioned.

## Considerations

### i. *The first scene: the ruler:*

#### (a) he knelt before him . . .

Humility induced by necessity. How many times our needs bring us to Christ, to whom we would not have come unless they had existed! We may also learn the lesson of intercession for others in their needs; while the daughter is dying the prayers of the father save her.

#### (b) my daughter is this moment dead . . .

She was raised up and could prepare for her second death. I shall die but once!

#### (c) Jesus rose up . . .

He is always willing to leave whatever he is doing in order to perform a work of charity. This is an example for superiors and prelates.



What a different way of dealing with people! Christ had said to the ruler who came to him about his son: Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe. But, now, confronted with humility, it is: Do not be afraid, just have faith!

*2. The second scene: the woman with the issue of blood:*

(a) she has been in the grip of this illness twelve years . . .

She has been the object of much speculation. St Augustine considers her a type of the Gentiles, while the daughter of Jairus is a type of the Jewish nation.

For others she represents hardened sinners; twelve years of a shameful illness which kept her away from public life, took away her strength, as habitual sins do. Nothing more difficult to cure, unless God works a miracle.

Others see in the young girl those who sin through malice; in this woman the sin of inadvertence and weakness. Both of these are distinct (cf. Numbers 15. 27).

(b) if I can even touch the hem of his cloak . . .

A typical case of a woman's confidence. Perhaps a little imperfect, with the idea of stealing a miracle unknown to anyone; but what confidence in his bounty and his power! This is a theme for preaching, if ever there was one! We sometimes accuse people of superstition in their devotions; but may there not be a great confidence in God under that appearance?

*3. The third scene: the resurrection:*

The Fathers of the Church and also other writers are accustomed to see in this three things:

(a) The way our Lord did things so quietly and without noise or disturbance of any kind. He preferred to be alone, at peace.

(b) Mystical interpretations of the circumstances of the miracle; e.g. to raise up the sinner it is necessary to make him live an active life of grace and feed himself with the appropriate food.

(c) Death, and Christ, the victor over it. There is need to meditate on the two kinds of life and death and also on the four ways in which we can die spiritually.

The soul enjoys two kinds of life, that of the just, in grace, and that of the vision of God face to face in heaven. There are four kinds of spiritual death; it dies through sin which is interior—in thought; by that which is exterior, in action; by that which, like Lazarus, is habitual; the fourth, from which it never rises.

It is a good thing to mourn for our dead, but not like the pagans, who have no hope. The death of the just is but a long sleep, from which they will rise again. Their life is not taken away from them, it is changed, that is all.

## SECTION 111. THE FATHERS

## I. HERMAS

1. *¶ necessary condition for our petitions—confidence:*

He said to me: Cast from you all doubt and do not hesitate to ask anything of God, thinking within yourself: How can I dare to ask something from God when I have been guilty of so many sins? Do not dwell on that thought; be converted in your heart to the Lord and ask things of him without doubting, then you will learn his mercy and that he will not abandon you but will fulfil the desires of your heart.

God is not like men, who remember always the offences; on the contrary, he forgets them and has pity on his creatures. . . .

If you still retain any doubt in your heart, then you will not be heard, because those who doubt God have a twisted heart and will never see their petitions answered. On the other hand, those of perfect faith ask with confidence and see their petitions granted.

2. *¶ Cheerful confidence:*

Leave aside all sadness, he said to me, because it is the brother of doubt and anger. How can it be, Lord, since it would seem to me that there is a great difference between them and sadness?

You are not prudent and do not know yet that sadness is the worst of the devils, very hard on the servants of God, which delivers a man to perdition and casts out the Holy Spirit more easily than any other devil.

Be clothed in joy, which is always agreeable to God and rejoice in it. The cheerful man feels and does good, despising sadness. On the other hand the sad man works evil; first of all because he saddens the Holy Spirit, which was given to man for his joy; secondly because in saddening him and in not praying to or confessing the Lord, he is guilty of a grave evil. The prayer of the sad man lacks strength enough to ascend to the altar of God.

3- *¶ Why?*

Because sadness lies heavy on the heart and mixes with our prayer, not allowing it to ascend clean to God. Just as oil mixed with vinegar loses its softness, so the spirit, if mingled with sadness, has not the same power in prayer. Free yourself from sadness and you will live for God.

4. *¶ God's help to fulfil the law:*

Lord God, these commandments are all so grand and beautiful, capable of bringing joy to the heart of the man who can keep them. But I know not if there be anyone capable of doing so, because they are difficult in the extreme.

He answered me: If you convince yourself that you can keep

them, then you will do so without difficulty and they will not seem hard to you; but if you begin to think that no man can keep them then you will not do so. . . .

Then, seeing me confused and worried, he began to speak to me softly and with sweetness, saying: Foolish and stupid man of doubts, do you not understand that the goodness and greatness of the glory of God made the world for man and subjected to him every creature, giving him the lordship over everything under heaven? If, then, man is the lord and master of all creation, can he not be so over these commandments? He who has God in his heart can be superior to any of these commands. He who is hard of heart and has God on his lips but lives far from him, he will find them hard and impossible.

Set God up in your hearts then, you who are weak and feeble in faith, and you will understand that there is nothing so easy, so sweet and meek as these commands. Change direction, you who walk the ways of the devil, which are indeed difficult and hard, bitter and fierce; and have no fear of Satan, because he has no power over you. The devil has no power over the hearts of the servants of the Lord, who hope in him with all their hearts. He may fight, but he will never win. Have confidence, then, in God, you who despair of salvation because of your sins, and who, by adding to them, make it ever more difficult; because if you are converted to the Lord with all your hearts and do the works of justice . . . he will heal you from your former faults and you will be able to put in chains the devil and his works.

## II. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

### 1. *On the Gospel:*

#### (a) The Lord discovers the woman with the issue of blood:

The woman approached with fear, ashamed of her illness, but without any doubt as to her cure, because she knew that this man dealt with publicans and sinners. Yet her faith was not perfect, because she thought that she would pass unnoticed. The Lord brought her to the notice of all, for many reasons:

- i. To calm her scruples, so that she might not think that she had stolen a miracle;
- ii. to correct her idea that anything could pass him by unnoticed ;
- iii. to praise her faith and set it up as a model, confirming, too, that of the ruler, which might be in danger when he heard that his daughter was dead.

#### (b) Her faith:

Just to give the girl time to die he entertained himself with this woman, as in the case of Lazarus, to make the miracle more surprising.



Let us think how the crowds pressed round him, just to see that he was not a difficult person, since he allowed himself to be pushed around by the people. We might also think of the faith of this woman, and how far it was superior to that of the ruler. She did not ask him to go to her house, she is quite content just to touch him with her fingers. For which she merited to hear from him, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.

(c) The miracle of the resurrection :

On reaching the house of the ruler the Lord acts as on other occasions. He gives no importance to the miracle, so that all might see that they were easy for him. Thus, during the storm on the lake he rebuked the disciples and when Lazarus died he said that he was asleep, by which he taught us that we must not be afraid of death, which after his coming is no more than a sleep. Then he took all the precautions necessary so that all might see that the miracle was a true one, and admitting only the parents to the room, he raised the girl and gave her to them, with the command that she could be fed.

(d) Two themes for meditation:

But I want you to think, not only about the miracle, but also about two other things, namely: the fact that he commanded that nothing should be said to anyone about it—which should teach you to avoid vainglory. He also rebuked those who were mourning and cast them from the house, as unworthy of seeing the miracle. Thus it was clear that death is nothing more than a sleep, a dream; but soon it will be clearer than the light of day . . . because the girl rose again, only to die again; and you, when you rise, will be immortal. Let no one weep or lament; let no one despise the victory of Christ. He overcame death. Why, then, do you weep?

2. *Not to mourn for the dead:*

(a) Even the Gentiles find motives for consolation :

Even the Gentiles find motives for consolation and say : Be strong, you cannot remedy what has happened or change it with your tears. Yet you hear a doctrine which is much more sublime. Are you not ashamed to be more of a coward than they ? Because we say to you, Have courage, she will rise again; the girl is not dead, but asleep. She has not perished, she is resting. She will be received, through the resurrection, into eternal life and the good fortune of the angels.

God calls death a blessing, and do you weep because of it? What would you do were you an enemy of the dead ? If there is room for tears, then give them to the devil. Weep for him, lament over him, and not for those who go to a better place. . . . A tranquil gate is that of death ! Think of how many evils there are in the present life, how many times you have cursed it because in it things go from

bad to worse, and from the beginning of it we do nothing but suffer. Why do you complain, then, and make others complain against God? Do you want sufferings for your departed ones, instead of the eternal glory of God? Many Gentiles dress their dead in white and put crowns of flowers on their heads to represent the glory of their life, and shall we do nothing but weep? We who know, not only the glory of a life which is over, but the eternal life which awaits us.

(b) Sorrow for our children:

Because you have no heir? And what of it? Would you prefer that he should be the heir to your goods or to those of heaven . . . ? You may have lost an heir, but God has named him his; he has not been a co-heir ■with his brother, but with Christ, yes. And to whom shall I leave my houses and my fields? Send them with him. The barbarians, when someone dies, burn, together with him, all his property, thinking that they are sending them with him. Send him yours, by giving alms to the poor, in which case, if he had any sin, it shall be imputed as pardon for him, and if he had not, then it will increase his reward.

Do you want to see him? Then live a holy life as he did and you will free yourself from the evils which surround you and will receive a glorious crown, because to bear trials patiently is better than almsdeeds and all virtue. Think of the Son of God who died for you; see how he accepted death and torments, only to rise again and merit glory. If all these things be not fables, then do not weep; hope. . . .

Let us weep for sinners, but with calm tears of the soul, because it is possible to weep without all this exterior appearance of sorrow. What many do is not very different from children's games, and those public tears come, not from a natural sorrow, but from ostentation and vainglory. . . . Weep long and in your house, when no one can see you, because that is an act of mercy and will be counted for your merit. He who thus weeps for the sinner will be careful not to fall into the same evil. . . . Weep for the infidel, and those who are like them; for those who die in the midst of riches, without the light of faith; for those who could have purchased, with their money, peace for their souls, and would not; they could have wiped out their sins by penance, and they did not; let us weep for these, yes, and all the days of our life, because those tears which come from the fear of God are infallible cures.

Let us weep for them and help them as far as we can. How? By praying for them and by asking others to pray and also by giving abundant alms to the poor. . . . Not in vain did the apostles command us to remember the dead in our great mysteries; they knew' well that they could obtain great advantages and useful help. . . . Even if it be forbidden to offer them for those who are not Christians,

still we can give them other kinds of help, because we can give alms for them to the poor so that, by this means, they may receive some consolation, since God wishes us to help one another.

### III. ST AUGUSTINE

#### 1. *Natural and excessive sadness at the death of those we love:*

St Paul tells the Thessalonians that they should not be sad like the Gentiles who have no hope. Therefore there is a sadness which is, in a certain way, natural in him who loves the dead. Because it is not merely an intellectual judgement, but nature herself which dislikes death; nor would death have come upon man but for a prior sin. If men who are born only to die love life, how much more the man who, had he not sinned, would have lived for ever? Therefore it is inevitable that we should be sad when those we love abandon us in death; but we must remember that they have not left us for ever; they have joined those whom we will have to follow one day. However, this death, naturally unpleasant, brings us sadness when it takes from us a person we have loved. That is why the apostle does not tell us that we should not sorrow, but that we should not do so like those who have no hope. Let us not be sorry for the death of our loved ones because of the need to lose them, rather we should do so with the hope of seeing them again. On the one hand we are saddened; on the other we are consoled. Our weakness overcomes us, faith consoles us; and that which wounds our human state is cured by the divine promise.

#### 2. *Funerals and suffrages:*

The pomp of the funeral ceremonies, the burial solemnities and the building of luxurious tombs are all rather a consolation to those who live instead of a help for the dead . . . There is no doubt that prayers and alms help the dead, but only those who have lived in such a way that they could find consolation in them after death. Because to those who died outside the faith or without the works of charity or the sacraments, these dues of piety are applied in vain. While they were with us they did nothing, and either did not receive, or received in vain, the grace of God, building up for themselves a treasure, not of mercy, but of anger. No new merits are added to the dead by the good works that are done for them; it is merely that such things are a consequence of the good works they did. . . .

Let us console our brethren when they celebrate funerals or when they weep, so that they may have no complaint and say: I waited for one who would console me and found no one. Let each one according to his means, bury his dead and build tombs over them,' since the Scriptures list this as one of the works of mercy and charity. . . . Let men fulfil this obligation and console themselves



with it in their sadness. But above all, let them apply to the souls of the dead abundant oblations, prayers and alms. Let them not love them merely in the flesh, but also in the spirit.

#### IV. ST AMBROSE

##### i. *Touching Christ by faith:*

In him that woman with the issue of blood hoped, and she was cured at once because she approached with faith. You also at least touch the hem of his garment with faith. By the warmth of the Word which heals, the issue of your passions will be stopped, those passions which burst forth like a torrent; provided you approach with faith. Provided at least that you touch but the hem of his garment, provided you touch it with a like faith in the divine word and that you throw yourself, trembling, at the feet of Christ.

And where are those feet of Christ to be found if not there, where the Body of Christ is? O faith, more firm than all the powers of the body! Faith, more effective than any doctor! As soon as the woman approached she felt the healing power and obtained her cure. . . . Here was an incurable illness, one which had exhausted the arts of medicine and her material means, cured instantly at the touch of a garment! What a great faith was this of the woman! She felt ashamed to be seen and she is not ashamed to confess the cause of her pain. Do not hide your faults; confess that of which he is already aware. Do not be ashamed of that which did not shame the prophets. Jeremias says: Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed! . . .

If anyone should say to you (and the faithful are often tempted like this), Where is the word of the Lord? Let it be fulfilled; then remember that to him also was it said: Let him come down from the cross and we shall believe in him. He put his confidence in God, let him deliver him, if he will. If anyone should say that to you, pay no heed to him. Neither did Christ wish to answer that kind of person. Ask Christ alone, because if you speak to them they will not believe you. Say to Christ: It was no wish of mine that calamity should befall mankind. That is what the woman said to him, and she was cured. Even though tired, even though ill for a long time, in spite of it all she said: I did not feel it a trouble to seek thee, for no one who seeks Christ feels worn out by it. On the contrary, he calls on those who are weary to come to him, that he may relieve them.

##### 2. *Humility:*

When Christ asked who had touched him do you not think that she would have replied, Lord, why do you ask? You already know; that which comes from my lips is already before you and for that reason I am not ashamed to confess my sins.

Peter was not ashamed when he said, Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, O Lord. Truly this man, who was wise and prudent and on whose shoulders the weight of the whole Church would rest and her teaching, preferred to be humble rather than to take pride in his good works. He did not ask to be abandoned, but not to lose his humility.

## SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

### I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

#### 1. *Confidence:*

Confidence takes its name from *fides* (faith) and it belongs to faith to believe something and in somebody. But confidence belongs to hope, according to John (n. 18). Thou shalt have confidence, hope being set before thee. Wherefore confidence apparently denotes chiefly that a man derives hope through believing the word of one who promises to help him. Since, however, faith signifies also a strong opinion, and since one may come to have a strong opinion about something, not only on account of another's statement, but also on account of something we observe in another, it follows that confidence may denote the hope of having something, which hope we conceive through observing something, either in oneself—for instance, observing that he is healthy, a man is confident that he will live long; or in another, for instance, through observing that another is friendly to him and powerful, a man is confident that he will receive help from him. . . .

Confidence denotes a certain strength of hope arising from some observation which gives one a strong opinion that one will obtain a certain good (2-2. q. 129. a. 6. c).

#### 2. *Opposed to fear and despair:*

Hope is directly opposed to despair, because the latter is about the same object, namely, good. But as regards contrariety of objects, it is opposed to fear, because the latter's object is evil. Now confidence denotes a certain strength of hope, wherefore it is opposed to fear, as hope is.

#### 3. *Temperance:*

(Since it would be impossible to give too many quotations from St Thomas's long treatise on the subject, we shall be content with a summan of his teaching on this virtue.)

i. *In one sense it is a general virtue*, because it implies moderation in all the passions and all human actions; on the other hand it is a special virtue, because it regulates the sense of touch principally. It is inferior to justice and to fortitude, but superior to humility and meekness.

ii. *Its measure is bodily health*: things which are pleasurable are ordained to fulfil some necessity in life. This need is the measure of temperance, which has for its object the ordering of their pleasurable things to an end.

iii. *Need it is then, that regulates temperance*: not merely absolute need, but also that which is convenient. That is why a man may, without being intemperate, use and desire things which are good for his well-being. This does not apply only to his body, but also to exterior things such as riches, honours, offices, social position, etc.

iv. *We can sin against temperance by excess or defect*. By excess in superfluous things; by defect if we abstain from even what is necessary for life, and this vice is called insensibility.

v. *It is not against temperance to abstain from what is necessary in certain cases*, but it can be praiseworthy and even necessary. Thus some, from bodily health reasons, abstain from certain pleasures in food and drink or sensual pleasure; as also in order to fulfil some office, such as that of an athlete or soldier, it is sometimes necessary. In the same way penitents, in order to recover the health of the soul, abstain from these pleasures and impose a kind of diet on themselves. Men who wish to give themselves to a contemplative life and to divine things, would abstain more from carnal pleasures (2-2. q. 141. a. 1-6).

## IL ST BONAVENTURE

(In his work *The Kingdom of God in the Gospel Parables*, the Saint talks about the three qualities necessary for perseverance, namely, a stable patience, strong confidence and sturdy perseverance. We shall give a summary of his doctrine on the second of these qualities.)

### 1. *Necessity of confidence for salvation*:

For salvation we need a high degree of confidence; the confidence possessed by that blessed thief when, according to St Luke, he said to our Lord: Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. This was the man who, because of the confidence he placed in divine mercy, merited to hear those words: Amen I say to you, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.

### 2. *Foundation for our confidence in the possession of the kingdom*:

But, why should I hope that the kingdom of God will be mine one day?

(a) Because of the divine liberality, which in chapter 6 of St Matthew and chapter 7 of St Luke invites me in these words: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice.



(b) Also by the truth, which comforts me, according to those words in St Luke: Do not be afraid, you, my little flock. Your Father has determined to give you his kingdom (Luke 12. 32).

(c) Lastly by the piety and charity with which I was redeemed, as we are told in the 5th chapter of the Apocalypse: Thou, Lord, art worthy to take up the book and break the seals that are on it. Thou wast slain in sacrifice; out of every tribe, every language, every people, even' nation thou hast ransomed us with thy blood and given us to God. Thou hast made us a royal race of priests, to serve God; we shall reign as kings over the earth.

### 3. *Conclusion:*

Why is it necessary to have confidence in order to possess the kingdom?

It follows from this that hope or confidence is necessary in order to possess the kingdom, and this is so because it lifts a man up to the heights; having lifted him up, it keeps him there; and by keeping him there it places him in the mansions of eternal glory.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

#### 1. *Confidence:*

(a) God, a faithful friend:

Now when I was alone and had no one in whose company I could find relaxation, I was unable to pray or read, but was like a person stunned by all this tribulation and fear that the devil might be deceiving me, and quite upset and worn out, with not the least idea what to do. I have sometimes—often, indeed—found myself in this kind of affliction, but never, I think, have I been in such straits as I was then. I was like this for four or five hours, and neither in heaven nor on earth was there any comfort for me: the Lord permitted my fears of a thousand perils to cause me great suffering. O my Lord, how true a Friend thou art, and how powerful! For thou canst do all thou wilt and never dost thou cease to will if we love thee. Let all things proclaim and praise thee, Lord of the world! Oh, if someone would but proclaim throughout the world how faithful thou art to thy friends! All things fail, but thou, Lord of them all, failest never. Little is the suffering that thou dost allow to those who love thee. O my Lord, how delicately and skilfully and delectably canst thou deal with them! . . . Thou seemest, Lord, to give severe tests to those who love thee, but only that in the extremity of their trials they may learn the greater extremity of thy love . . . (*Life*, chap. 25).

## (b) Confidence in the power of God against temptations:

Well, now, I went on, If this Lord is so powerful, as I see he is and know he is, and if the devils are his slaves (and of that there can be no doubt, because it is an article of Faith), what harm can they do me, who am a servant of this Lord and King? How can I fail to have fortitude enough to fight against all hell? So I took a cross in my hand and it really seemed that God was giving me courage; in a short time I found that I was another person and I should not have been afraid to wrestle with devils, for with the aid of that cross I believed I could easily vanquish them all. Come on, now, all of you, I said; I am a servant of the Lord and I want to see what you can do to me . . . (*ibid.*).

## (c) Efficacy of confident action:

In answer to my supplications our Lord has frequently delivered souls from grave sins, and has led others to greater perfection. As to rescuing souls from purgatory and doing other such notable things, the favours which he has granted me here are so numerous that I should be fatiguing myself, and fatiguing the reader, too, if I were to describe them. Many more of them have concerned the health of the soul than the health of the body. This fact has been generally recognized and there have been numerous witnesses to it. It used to cause me great scruples, for I could not help believing that the Lord was doing this because of my prayers—apart, of course, from the chief reason, Avhich is his pure goodness. But now these favours have been so numerous and have been observed by so many people, that it causes me no distress to believe this.

2. *Death:*

## (a) He who serves God does not fear death:

I was also left with very little fear of death, of which previously I had been very much afraid. Now it seems to me to be very easy for one who serves God, for in a moment the soul sees itself freed from this prison and at rest. This experience in which God bears away the spirit in these transports and shows it such excellent things, seems to me very much like that in which a soul leaves the body; for it finds itself in possession of all these good things in a single instant. We may leave out of account the pains of the moment of its flight, to which no great importance need be attached; to those who love God in truth and have put aside the things of this world death must come very gently.

## (b) Our true home—heaven:

I think, too, that this experience has been of great help to me in teaching me where our true home is and in showing me that on earth we are but pilgrims; it is a great thing to see what is awaiting us there and to know where we are going to live. For if a person has

to go and settle in another country, it is a great help to him to know the trials of the journey if he has found out that it is a country where he will be able to live in complete comfort. It also makes it easier for us to die if we think upon heavenly things and try to have our conversation in heaven. . . .

(c) Death in mortal sin:

On another occasion something else of this kind happened which gave me a very bad fright. I was in a place where a certain person had died after leading for many years, as I knew, a very bad life. But for two years he had been ill and in some respects seemed to have mended his ways. He died without making his confession, but in spite of all this I did not myself think he would be damned. While his body was being wrapped in its shroud I saw a great many devils taking hold of it and apparently playing with it and treating it roughly. I was horrified at this: they were dragging it about in turn with large hooks. When I saw it being taken to burial with the same honour and ceremony that is paid to all dead persons, I kept thinking upon the goodness of God, who would not allow that soul to be dishonoured but permitted the fact of its having been his enemy to be concealed.

After what I had seen I was half crazy. During the whole of the funeral office I saw no more devils; but afterwards, when the body was laid in the grave, there was such a crowd of them waiting there to take possession of it that I was beside myself at the sight and had need of no little courage to hide the fact. If they were taking possession like this of the unfortunate body, I reflected, what would they do with the soul?

## II. ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

### Rules of Penance

(From the *Spiritual Exercises*, first week, 10th addition.)

*I will add to the practices already recommended some satisfaction or penance:*

Penance is interior and exterior.

Interior penance is sorrow for our personal sins, accompanied by the firm resolution to sin no more.

Exterior is as the fruit of the interior sentiments. It is a punishment which a sincere repentance causes us to inflict, and is practised chiefly in three ways.

First, in nourishment, if we retrench something, not of superfluous food (that is the office of temperance), but of something proper for us; and the more we retrench, the better we do, as long as nature does not become too weak or ill.



In the second place, in sleep or rest, if we give up not only luxury—that which would give delight—but also that which might be only convenient; always avoiding however, what would seriously endanger the health or life. For this reason we must not retrench necessary sleep, or at least, very little, and only in the case of having to cure ourselves of the bad habit of sleeping too long.

Finally, in the treatment of the body; if we inflict painful sensations on our body, by the use of hair-shirts, cords or iron girdles....

Exterior penance serves for three purposes, or produces three principal effects; it serves as excellent satisfaction for past sins; it exercises man in conquering himself and in submitting the inferior part of himself, his senses, to the superior part, or the reason; finally, it solicits and obtains those gifts of grace which we desire—for example, lively contrition for our sins, abundant tears for them or over the cross of Jesus Christ, the solution of a doubt that has troubled us, etc.

When the desired feelings of consolation or sorrow are not derived from the Exercises, it is useful to modify the regimen a little by mortifying ourselves differently from what we have done before, in our eating, sleeping or the treatment of our body. So that when a penance has been practised three days, for example, it may be interrupted two days or longer, according as the state of the soul requires more or less penance.

Care in varying and interrupting these exterior mortifications during the Exercises procures the following great advantages. It frequently happens that certain persons neglect all practice of penance, either from excess of sensuality or because they persuade themselves that their constitution cannot bear it without danger: others, on the contrary, relying too much on their strength, pass the bounds of all discretion. But by changing the kind of penance, and trying first one then another, it happens that we obtain through this experience, and by the grace of God, who sees the depths of our nature, the knowledge of what will be most useful to us.

### III. FRAY LUIS OF GRANADA

(In his *Sinner's Guide*, he has a most useful chapter on the calling of Christ to our aid before our death; a chapter which, for lack of space, we can only reduce to a summary.)

#### A warning

It is far too widely thought that we can put off our conversion to God until the time when death approaches. While such conversions are possible, given the grace of God, they are not usual. A man dies

as he has lived, normally. Let us try to prove this from the saints who received special illuminations from the Holy Spirit.

### The Fathers of the Church on this matter

#### *St Augustine:*

Conversion demands liberty, not necessity; and little liberty is his who has not given up his sins, rather it is the sins which are giving him up. True conversion saves us at any moment, but it is extremely difficult for the man who is surrounded by affliction and cares. Even if he does attain it, what will be the penalties which await him in purgator}”?

#### 2. *St Jerome:*

Eusebius, his disciple, writing to St Damasus about the death of the saint, records some of the more harsh things he said before his death, especially with regard to the difficulty of recollecting oneself at that time and meditating on conversion. He had great doubts concerning those who are said to have done it, because he had seen many rich people who, after an apparent conversion, got better and were worse afterwards than before. By a miracle will he have a good end whose life has been evil.

#### 3. *St Isidore:*

He who at the end of his life wishes to die well, let him do penance while he is well. If he leaves it until the last moment, then just as his condemnation is uncertain, so too, is his salvation.

#### 4. *St Gregory:*

Commenting on the words of Job 27. 8 he says that God does not hear, in times of trial, the voices of those who forgot him in times of peace. He recalls the parable of the foolish virgins.

### Theologians

#### 1. *Scotus:*

He treats of this matter in the 4th *Book of Sentences*, w'here he explains a conclusion which reads thus : Penance which is done at the hour of death is hardly true penance, because of the great difficulty at that moment. He gives four reasons for this conclusion :

(a) Because of the impossibility of giving oneself to works of penance :

The pains of the last illness occupy our minds, the presence of death prevents us from lifting the mind to God as we should. It should not be forgotten that the strongest passions in man are those which produce sadness rather than joy, and these abound at the moment of death. Among the four impediments to prayer laid down

by Si Bernard one is sickness. How well we know from our experience of small ills, that they leave us incapable of great efforts. Are we going to leave our conversion until such a time as this?

(b) Secondly, because penance at such a time is sure to lack the element of liberty:

True repentance must be free, voluntary . . . done willingly, not from necessity; and this latter would seem to be the case in many instances of death-bed repentance. He repeats St Jerome's statement that experience has shown many of these who, on their return to health, forgot all about their repentance. Could we sum it up in the old saying; when the devil was ill, the devil a saint would be; but when the devil was well, the devil a saint was he ?

(c) From the habits of sin:

These usually accompany such a one until the very moment of death, as the shadow follows the body. Habit is like a second nature, difficult to overcome. . . . It is one of the punishments God allows for habitual sin, that it should accompany a man to the very tomb.

(d) Because of the little value of those works of penance:

The Christian who deliberately tries to leave his conversion until the last moment sins grievously, because of the great harm he is doing to his own soul and the great danger to which he exposes his salvation. It should be obvious to anyone who knows anything at all about God and his ways. Such last minute services are not going to please him as much as the others. As St Lucy said : Of what use is it to be very generous with something which you will have to give up in any case ?

(e) Christ's warnings and exhortations :

He proposed for our meditation the parable of the good servant whom his Lord found watching; because the master will come at an hour when he is least expected. He warns his own that they must always be on the watch; he tells them the story of the wise and foolish virgins. We must not try to console ourselves with the thought of the good thief. That is an extraordinary grace, given to few. The usual thing is that, as the Apostle tells us, as we live, so shall we die. The ordinary rule of providence is that those who do good works shall gain eternal life by them; those who do evil, eternal punishment. God's usual rule is to render to every man according to his works.

## 2. *Greenstock, David :*

(A summary of the doctrine contained in one chapter of *Death, the Glorious Adventure*, concerning the Sacrament of Extreme Unction [Anointing of the Sick]—a consolation in serious illness.)



## The oil of gladness:

When we think of the importance of suffering, and especially when we realize how necessary it is for us to die well, many of us have the feeling that we shall never be able to rise to the occasion. We have been so occupied in the past with the good things of this world that we have neglected God. Shall we ever be able to accept suffering and death when the time comes? Above all, perhaps, the thought of our past life with its tale of repeated infidelities to grace makes us afraid of the very thought of death. Will even our sufferings enable us to face our Judge with anything like tranquillity?

God, in his wisdom and mercy, has foreseen all these difficulties and has provided for them. He has given us a special sacrament which will help us to prepare to meet him face to face; a sacrament which will heal all the wounds of our soul and which may even heal our stricken body if it be his will. It is known as Extreme Unction—the Last Anointing. From our schooldays we remember what St James says about this sacrament: Is any man sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man. And the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him (5. 14-15). But we have probably never meditated those words with a view to finding out exactly what this sacrament is intended to do in the soul and body of the sick person. . . .

The priest, . . . moistening his thumb with oil specially blessed for the purpose, anoints the sick person on the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands and feet. In each case he prays that God, by this holy anointing and his great mercy, may forgive whatever sins have been committed by sight, hearing, smell, speech or taste, touch or walking. . . .

But perhaps it is the special sacramental graces that the sick person finds most consoling. Once this sacrament has been received, a great peace descends on the soul, and with reason. If we remember the causes of our fears in danger of death, then we see clearly how this peace of soul is accomplished.

Extreme Unction removes all fear of the judgement which awaits the soul, because it forgives all sins provided we are sorry for them. It can even reach beyond the limits of absolution in certain circumstances. The sick person may be unconscious, for example, yet in the depths of the soul there is sorrow for the sins which have been committed. Absolution may not avail in this case, because the acts of the penitent cannot be expressed externally; Extreme Unction will forgive those sins completely.

In all of us sin dies hard; it leaves its roots in bad habits, and evil inclinations, even when the guilt of sin has been removed by a good confession. The soul remains weak, just as the body does after a

serious illness. One of the effects of this sacrament is to remove this weakness, bringing the soul back to perfect spiritual health. St Thomas Aquinas claims that this sacrament is the immediate preparation of the soul for entrance into heaven. Once it has been received with the proper dispositions, there is no longer need for us to fear the past or the judgement. In itself this is sufficient to bring great peace to the soul and to enable it to defeat all the temptations of the devil to despair.

Nor are these dispositions difficult to acquire. A good confession will produce most of them at once. If the sick person is unconscious, an habitual sorrow for sin even though it be from the lowest motive of fear of the divine punishments, is sufficient. There should also be a willingness to accept God's will, which can easily be obtained through a careful recitation of the Our Father, in which we pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven....

Now is the moment for us to repent for having turned away from God in the past. It is not too late, because he can put us back on the right road in a moment. There is plenty of room in God's plan for the Magdalens of this world and for the Augustines. All the evil effects of our past revolt can be undone once we recognize God's supremacy and accept it with all our hearts, sorry for having allowed ourselves to stray from his paths.

Above all, there is one thing we can do to prove to God that we have at last decided to put ourselves under his rule in all things—we can accept death at his hands as part of the price we have to pay for having sinned against him. We can accept our illness in a spirit of humility, knowing that in God's hands it can prove an effective purification and preparation for heaven. This will not be easy at first, because nature rebels against both sickness and death; but we can do it, provided we are careful to consider all the motives we have for accepting God's will.

Once we have managed to produce in our souls this sorrow for past sin, embracing everything which has been an offence against God, and once we have achieved a voluntary acceptance of God's will for us, then we can be sure that we are perfectly prepared to receive Extreme Unction. We shall then obtain the full benefit of that great sacrament and be in a fit state to meet God face to face. Fear will then give place to a great joy and peace, because we shall know that, whatever our lives may have been in the past, all is forgiven, and we can now make a fresh start. The fact that our fresh start happens to coincide with the end of our lives on earth does not worry God one bit, because he looks at these things from the viewpoint of eternity, not from that of time, besides, he sent his Son on earth, not to call the just, but sinners. Once we have received this sacrament we can die in peace.

## SECTION VI. LITERARY AND HISTORICAL NOTES

### 1. *The death of St Monica:*

My son, she said to Augustine, nothing now binds me to this earth; I do not know why I am still alive, since all my hopes have been realized. I wished to live for one thing only, to see you a Christian and a Catholic before my death. God has done much more than that for me; and once that I have seen you despise earthly happiness for his service, what more could I desire in this life ?...

When those who were attending her complained that it was a pity she was to die so far from her native land she said to her son: Bury my body where you like and do not worry about it any more. What I ask of you and recommend to you is that you remember me before the altar of God wherever you may be.

### 2. *St Isidore:*

One of his famous remarks to his sister: There are three things that I fear: the moment when my soul will leave this body; the encounter with God; the sentence he will pronounce against me.

### 3. *Fear of death:*

The fact which appears most significant to me in the course of the last fifty years is the change in the moral climate of our country, which has passed from an exaggerated optimism to an equally exaggerated pessimism, which is at times near despair.

Fifty' years ago humanity, especially the American people, was firmly convinced that this was the best of all possible worlds and that it was getting better day by day; that there was a God in heaven, full of goodness, who took a paternal interest in the condition, happiness and constant progress of humanity, even though at times his ways were inscrutable to us.

Nowadays we have lost this faith and -we feel frightened to death. The spectre of wars terrifies us, atom bombs, a general decadence of the human race towards the borders of the most barbaric brutality (Quoted by Allen, *The Big Change* New York, 1952).

## SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### A: Confidence

#### Confidence in the spiritual life

##### 1. *We should make a habit of confidence in God:*

A famous spiritual writer says: Confidence in God is one of those elements in the spiritual life which it is a good thing to make into a habit.



2. *Confidence and sanctity:*

(a) Lack of confidence:

Many souls do not free themselves from sin because they lack confidence in the divine mercy. Here is a grave consequence of sin and one of the most terrible; it can darken the soul to such an extent that it cannot see God's mercy.

(b) St Thérèse and confidence:

A few years were enough to take her to the heights of sanctity, and the keynote of her spirituality was confidence in God.

Confidence in the liturgy

1. *Confidence is one of the dominant sentiments in the liturgy:*

(a) One of the finest proofs of it is in the recommendation of a departing soul; also in the Office and Mass for the dead. There we find the Church praying: Although he sinned, he did not deny the Father, the Son or the Holy Ghost. Command that the soul of your servant be led ... to the heavenly paradise, so that, having hoped and believed in thee, he may not suffer the punishments of hell, but may possess the eternal joys. It would almost appear as if the Church excused the sins committed, appealing solely to the hope and confidence of the dying or the dead.

(b) The psalms are full of the same plea; the servant must fix his eyes on his Lord and hope in him; he will feed him.

2. *Confidence^ characteristic of this 23rd Sunday after Pentecost:*

(a) The Gospel:

The two figures, the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus, inspire us with this sentiment; so does the Church when she prays with Jeremias (20. 11 ff), My designs are peaceful ones, and not those of affliction. . . .

(b) No pessimism:

The Christian should have no room for pessimism or anything like it. Always confidence.

† (c) The Epistle:

i. *Confidence in our resurrection—that is the main theme.* Christ will raise us up as he did the daughter of Jairus; he will transform us, giving us of the splendour of his glory.

ii. *As a practical consequence.* Our life must not then be one of the senses or material. We must not walk as enemies of the Cross of Christ, but like Paul. Embrace the Cross as he did; the faith in our configuration with Christ must be ever deeper and should encourage us. The sufferings of this time are not to be compared to the glory to come (Rom. 8. 18).

## Touch Christ

If we will only draw near and touch him as did this woman then he will heal us. We do touch him, in the Eucharist. He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me, he says. The only thing wanting is our confidence.

### B: Recommendation of the soul

#### 1. *A salutary practice:*

Not all Christians realize the importance of practising it as the Church wishes. This soul is about to leave the body ; we should pray especially for it.

(a) The members of the family should make sure (apart from the fact that the sacraments should be administered in this state) that the person ill is conscious, if possible, when these prayers are said.

(b) The priest should take care to repeat parts of it in English so that they will be understood ; slowly and reverently, so that they go to the very- hearts of all who are present ; that all may join in the sentiments of the Church and hear her words at this moment.

#### 2. *The Church never shows herself more maternal:*

(a) We may say with truth that never does she show herself such a true mother as at this moment of the commendation of the departing soul.

(b) Not even the natural parents would know how to say such kind and gentle words of hope and courage to their dying children.

#### 3. *The fundamental significance of the ceremony:*

(a) It is the handing over by the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant of a son or daughter who passes from one world to the other.

(b) Even though the situation is one of suffering for those who love the sick person, and even for the sick person himself; still there is a certain beauty<sup>7</sup> about the whole scene, taking place as it does on the borders of the two worlds.

(c) What is more, the Church has found poetic expressions, full of tenderness, inspired by the Sacred Scriptures; she has chosen texts of the Old and New Testament which are most adapted to these circumstances.

#### 4. *The triumphant chant:*

(a) The words of the Church are not merely those of consolation and hope; they are mainly words of triumph. This note of victory is increased as the prayers go on.

(b) That is why these prayers increase the faith of those around the sick bed until even the weakest of them should be able to penetrate with the Church into the supernatural world of glory', to which this sick person is so soon to belong.

*z. Invitation to the saints:*

The Church begins by inviting the saints to be present here and to pray for the sick person. The Mother of God and all the blessed are requested to lift up their voices in prayer for this person, so soon to appear before the divine presence.

*6. Go forth, O Christian soul:*

(a) The Church afterwards turns to the dying person and invites him to die, using that wonderful expression: Go forth, O Christian soul, out of this world, in the name of the Father who created thee, in the name of the Son who redeemed thee, in the name of the Holy Ghost who sanctified thee. She ends the first prayer with these consoling words: May your place be today one of peace and your dwelling in Holy Sion.

(b) How many times will these words be said over people who have had to struggle all their lives, without hardly being aware of the relative peace which can, at times, be obtained in this life! Now they are going to enter into that life in which all is peace.

*7. Letters of recommendation:*

(a) In such terms we may truly speak of the prayers which follow the one we have just mentioned. The Church begins by asking God to: Have compassion on his sighs, have compassion on his tears; and admit him, who has no hope but in thy mercy, to the sacrament of thy reconciliation.

(b) After this she addresses the sick man once more, commending him to God, whose creature he is, saying: When thou shalt have paid the debt of all mankind by death, thou mayest return to thy Maker, who formed thee from the dust of the earth.

(c) She calls upon all the choirs of angels to come to meet the soul, no sooner freed from the body; she asks Mary the Mother of God to take special charge over it. All the saints are there once more, in her pleas; the devil is charged to keep away. St Joseph, sweet patron of the dying, is there as well, in her prayer.

*8. The sacerdotal prayer:*

But without dwelling any more on the individual prayers of the liturgy for the departing soul, let us fall back on the sacerdotal prayer of Christ in the 17th chapter of St John. There we shall see Christ himself, just before his passion and death, praying for his Church—for us. The theme of his prayer is that he wills it that we should be with him in heaven, united with him there as we have been on earth. What more consoling thoughts than these can be given to a dying person!

(a) This is the supernatural meaning of life, the one thing that matters. Our life is hidden with Christ's life, in God—one day it will be manifest in all its glory (Col. 3. 3-4).



(b) The soul may leave the body, but it is to hide itself in Christ until, one day, even the body itself will be restored to life.

9. *Conclusions:*

(a) This scheme seems particularly adapted to retreats, etc., although it can be preached in the normal way from the pulpit.

(b) For the benefit of those who need it, the preacher should never forget the terrible aspects of death, the judgement, etc.

(c) But at the same time he should not forget the mind of the Church in these prayers. There is hope and consolation here; strength too. All men need something of that.

(d) There is a story about Xavier of Burgos, the minister of Elizabeth II of Spain. When he, great humanist as he was, came to the moment of death, he asked that the Gospel of St John should be read to him, saying that he wished to die hearing the words of the sacred text.

## C: Temperance

### St Paul and this virtue

1. *The citizenship of heaven . . .*

He warns those of Philippi that they should lift up their eyes to their true home and to that citizenship which they will enjoy when Christ raises them up and transforms their mortal bodies, conformed to his glory.

2. *He then exhorts them to practise the virtue of temperance:*

(a) We must live as citizens of heaven, giving up the baser pleasures of the flesh, practising mortification and temperance.

(b) This is a virtue which is seldom explained; yet it is one of the cardinal virtues, necessary to live a Christian life.

(c) It has two meanings; one general, the mean which has to be kept in all the moral virtues, since they deal with things of this earth; and the special meaning as a virtue in its own right.

### The object of temperance

I. *Primarily:*

(a) To regulate and moderate:

- i. the desire for things of sense;
- ii. pleasure taken in them;
- iii. the sadness which follows when we are deprived of them—  
all this principally with reference to the sense of touch.

(b) St Thomas gives us the reason:

He says that since these pleasures come from natural actions, they are more violent and demanding the more natural is the action.

Therefore, the more natural the action the more need for something to keep it in check.

(c) The most natural of all actions, common to all:

Those connected with the conservation of the individual—eating and drinking.

(d) Consequently this virtue has for its main object the moderation of:

- i. the pleasures of eating and drinking;
- ii. sensual pleasures;
- iii. all of which are intimately connected with the sense of touch.

2. *Secondarily:*

The pleasures of the other senses.

### The rules of temperance

1. *They can be deduced from the need to preserve life:*

(a) In so far as the act destined for the conservation of the species is concerned, that must be moderated by the virtue of temperance. Thus it would be wrong to seek in that act only pleasure, with the exclusion of its other purpose.

(b) In the conservation of the individual the same rule applies; we eat to live; we do not live to eat.

2. *Necessity is the rule, not absolute necessity, but relative:*

Thus a man may, without being lacking in temperance, desire and use that which is not absolutely necessary for his health, but is convenient to his well-being. This is not merely to be judged by bodily standards, but also applies to such exterior things as riches, social position, honours, etc.

### Sins against temperance

1. *By excess:*

Temperance, which we shall not deal with at the moment.

2. *By defect:*

(a) If someone, in order to avoid all sensible pleasure, should attempt to abstain from even that which is necessary for life; this is called insensibility.

(b) But it is not contrary to temperance to abstain even from necessary things in some cases, in fact, it can be a good thing and worthy of praise:

- i. for health reasons;
- ii. because of one's office—soldiers, athletes;
- iii. penitents, to satisfy for their sins by mortification;
- iv. in the case of those who wish to give themselves up to a life of contemplation.

## II. THE GOSPEL

### A: Christian and pagan idea of death

#### Two attitudes face to face with death

1. *In the Gospel, the daughter offaints:*

- (a) Those who wept and mourned around her dead body;
- (b) Christ: Make room, there; the child is not dead, she is asleep.

2. *Throughout the ages:*

This gospel contrast is typical of the two ideas which have existed since then about death.

(a) The pagan:

- i. death, a rest;
- ii. from which comes our despair and affliction.

(b) The Christian:

- i. death, a rest;
- ii. Make no mistake, brethren, about those who have gone to their rest, you are not to lament over them, as the rest of the world does, with no hope to live by (1 Thess. 4. 12).

### Death, a sleep

1. *The resurrection, fundamental point of Christian doctrine:*

- (a) If Christ rose, we shall rise also (2 Cor. 4. 13).
- (b) Their life is changed, not taken away (Preface, Mass of the Dead).

2. *Death considered as a sleep:*

(a) In the Scriptures:

Even the Old Testament has the word (2 Mach. 12. 45-46):

- i. Christ used it in this scene we are describing;
- ii. he uses it again when he speaks to his disciples of the death of Lazarus;
- iii. St Paul in 1 Thess. 4. 13-15, uses it three times. He is speaking mainly of the death of those who die in Christ, i.e. in grace; for these death is a sleep, a rest. It is the gateway to a better life, just as sleep gives us greater vigour.

(b) For the early Christians:

It is clear from the writings and customs of the early Christians that they, too, thought of death in this way.

- i. *The inscriptions in the catacombs:* You live with Christ; you sleep in peace; you rest with Christ, etc.
- ii. *They thought of the dead as members of the Church,* which explains in part the ancient custom of putting a portion of the Sacred Host in the mouth of the dead to signify their union with Christ.



(c) In the Middle Ages:

i. In some places inscriptions have been found like this one, underneath the effigy of a skull: As you see yourself, so was I; as you see me, so shall you be; everything has to end here; think of it, and you will not sin.

ii. Such inscriptions, of Christian origin, explain in graphic fashion how death strips us of all things material. This is something typical of the Middle Ages.

(d) The early Christians did not fix their attention on that aspect of death.

(e) On the other hand, in the days of the great penitential preachers it was very common and was the sentiment most graven on the minds of the people. To the same sentiments pertain the hymn *Dies Irae* and the picture of the Last Judgement by Michelangelo. Humanity looked at itself rather than at God. Men see themselves guilty and feel conscious of their sins. One might say that it was the era of fear, while that of the catacombs was the era of hope and confidence, the centuries in which the people lived the theology of St Paul. Both aspects are correct; but the attitude of the early Christians is more in conformity with the optimism of a true Christian.

3. *Cemetery, dormitory:*

(a) An ancient name for it, with a very Christian meaning;

(b) the dead have died in and are at rest in Christ.

i. luxury in the construction of tombs, etc., should be avoided;

ii. so, too, should images and inscriptions which have little or no Catholic feeling about them. Clocks which mark the fatal hour, broken harps, etc.

iii. Christian indeed are the famous : Rest in peace; He rested in the Lord; In the peace of Christ, etc.

## Mourning and flowers

1. *The tears of a Christian:*

(a) Sadness is a natural sentiment confronted with the loss of one dear to us. It does not necessarily reveal lack of faith, indeed it is a sign of affection.

(b) Christ wept over Lazarus' tomb;

(d) but it must be resigned, since death is but a separation, not a definite loss.

i. Despair at death is a pagan sentiment, not a Christian one;

ii. St Paul warns the Thessalonians about this (i. 4. 12).

2. *Flowers:*

(a) Ancient custom of pagan origin, adopted by the Christians; there is nothing against it provided there is no excessive waste of

money and also, this is most important, that we have already provided for prayers for the dead—much more effective than any flowers could be!

(b) We should remember that such things as these are more for the consolation of the living than for the benefit of the dead.

## B: Fear of and desire for death

### 1. *The problem:*

A theme partly moral and partly ascetical. There are three attitudes towards death:

- i. fear,
- ii. desire for it,
- iii. indifference to it.

### 2. *Fear:*

Fear of death is the usual thing, even in the case of good souls, including some saints.

#### (a) Death is to be feared:

- i. it is a definitive step;
- ii. behind which there are many unknown qualities;
- iii. it is against nature, which desires life;
- iv. it is a punishment; not to fear it would mean not to fear God.

#### (b) It is logical that it should be feared:

Most spiritual writers teach us that the fear *of* death is the work of the grace of God and helps the increase of the life of grace and perfection. But it is understood that this fear must be in proportion.

#### (c) No one needs to be anxious because he cannot bring himself to desire death:

There are some authors who teach that the fear of death is a better sign of a good spirit than the desire for it.

### 3. Death can be longed for from various motives, one of which, pertaining to sanctity, is a special and extraordinary grace of God:

- (a) the illicit desire for death is that which is founded on despair;
- (b) it is lawful to desire it:

i. *to flee from the penalties of the life of this world:* So full of labours and evils is this life, that if God had not laid down death as a punishment, we would have been obliged to beg it of him as a mercy. To long for rest from labours and trials is perfectly legitimate.

ii. *so as no longer to see persecutions* against the Church and offences against God.

iii. *to free ourselves from sinning against God,* to avoid mortal and venial sins.

(c) It is an act of sanctity to desire death in order to see God face to face. It is rather a desire for God than a longing for death. Just as Paul longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Phil. 1.23). Death for him, he says, is gain.

4. *Holy Christian indifference:*

(a) Neither the fear of God is a sign of little progress in the spiritual life, nor the longing for death a manifestation of holiness. Death is the instrument of God, who at one and the same time punishes us through it and opens true happiness to us. According as the soul contemplates one or other aspect there will be produced in it feelings of fear or longing.

(b) Both should go hand in hand with holy indifference; this is the best sign of the right spirit. It is all one; a long life or a short one; this type of death or the other. When, how and where God wills that I should die—only that it may be the beginning of a new life.

## C: The death of the sinner

i. *The death of sinners a terrible evil:*

(a) Those who die at the moment of committing a mortal sin:

That is an evil death indeed and we may have serious fears for their immortal salvation.

(b) Sinners who die without repenting:

A sad and bitter death this one, for them and for their friends and relatives, who find themselves deprived of their best source of consolation—death in God's friendship.

(c) The careless ones:

Many are they who go through life asleep, unaware of their responsibilities to God; they go from sin to sin, without ever thinking of death. Their only rule of life seems to be to enjoy themselves as much as possible without worry about the future. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.

(d) This sermon is for all these, and it is:

i. *useful, because they do not know how they are going to die.* Most probably death will surprise them in sin, since they live in sin at most times. The thought of such a death might be a means towards a change in their lives.

ii. *effective also for the lazy and indifferent,* so that they may get out of that frame of mind, usually one of mortal sin;

iii. *and for the just, too,* that they may work out their salvation in fear and trembling.



## 582 TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### 2. *Death, a punishment:*

Many preachers of the Middle Ages presented to their hearers the words written on the wall and read by Baltassar, who interpreted them for the king, as directed towards sinners: *Mauel, thecel, phares*.

#### (a) Death is a punishment:

It came into the world for that purpose and so it remains:

- i. for the just it can be a consolation;
- ii. for the sinner it is, apart from a punishment which includes the physical sufferings of the last illness, etc., the punishment of the just God against one who has turned his back on him.

#### (b) Christ presented it to us as a punishment:

In the parable of the ten virgins, the five foolish represent the sinner. The latter, like them, spends his life idle, giving no thought to the preparation of the oil of good works. The “I know you not” of the Gospel is the judgement which such a one will hear from the mouth of the Judge.

### 3. *Three anxious glances:*

Death is not so terrible from the point of view of the physical sufferings as from that of the mental and moral. Doctors agree that the moment of death is not the moment of most suffering. But the soul suffers, perhaps as never before. The mind, perhaps less alert and powerful than before, directs three anxious glances at the past, the present and the future.

#### (a) The present:

The light of faith has not gone out, but it is less vivid than formerly; God is there, present to the soul, but not as clearly as before; sin has dulled our conscience . . . the soul finds itself sinking, without the strength left to fight. Undoubtedly this weight is heavy on the heart.

#### (b) The past:

The darkness which surrounds us helps only to throw more light on the past . . . at such times the conscience can become over-sensitive; we can detect sin where there was none; but we also see more clearly the evil of those we have really committed. . . . Such a past life, with such a light thrown on it, can it cause anything else but a great sorrow, almost despair?

#### (c) The future:

It is uncertain, which is always painful. There are grave risks, lack of positive merits, and of energy to do anything about it now. The idea of an immediate solution to our state . . . all this will produce in the soul of the sinner dreadful sufferings at the thought that his future may be an unhappy one.

4. *Temptations:*

(a) At the hour of death many and varied, common to the sinner and the just alike:

- i. perhaps more numerous in the case of the just, because the devil is now making his last attack on the fortress;
- ii. but those of the sinner torment the soul much more.

(b) The grace and mercy of God will be more abundant too:

Perhaps never in its life will the soul have as much help from God. But the sinner should fear, because the Fathers and writers of the Church have pointed out that it is difficult to bring about a really sincere last-minute conversion.

5. *We must not put off our conversion:*

A consequence of what we have said before. It is true that there are cases of a bad life ending in a good death; there have also been cases of the opposite, but both are exceptions. The general rule is: As in life, so in death. Life has an influence on death. To die well after a bad life is a very special grace from divine mercy which no one has the right to demand or to hope for. The usual thing is that death depends on life.

6. *Conclusions:*

(a) Advice to sinners:

Hate sin, leave occasions and dangers of sin alone.

(b) To the tepid:

If the saints have been afraid of death, how much more the tepid should fear it. Let them not hope to attain sanctity at the last moment, because sanctification in the last illness is one of the rarest phenomena of the spiritual life, says Faber.

(c) To the just:

Be persevering in good works, prayer and sacrifices.

## D: The death of the just

i. *Death, a hope:*

Death, as a punishment, should make us fear; but the infinite mercy of God has made of this dire punishment a means of hope.

(a) Sweet and desirable:

The death of Christ on the cross with those words: Into thy hands I commend my spirit; the death of the Virgin Mary, in ecstasy of love; that of St Joseph and so many other saints, teach the Christian that death, in the case of the just, is sweet and desirable.

(b) St Thomas says of it:

- i. If it is naturally hateful, it is nevertheless something to be desired because of eternal happiness;

ii. the virtuous is saddened by his death, because it is the privation of life and of powers; but it is a joy, at the same time, because of the hope for happiness;

iii. the thought of the death of the just gives to it an air of optimism and courage, which has many applications.

2. *Graces at the hour of death: A summary from Faber:*

(a) The graces of light:

As the lights of earth are extinguished one by one, so the heavens possess far more revelations for the soul. . . . The sight is keener; the intelligence more alive, the touch safer concerning the line of conduct to follow. Our sins are more clear to us, and therefore their hatred deeper and contrition more sincere. The thought that we shall soon see God excites our fervour. Faith, while it is still a step in the dark, shares in the light of vision....

(b) Supernatural warmth:

The graces of the hour of death seem to bring with them a special supernatural warmth which makes them more effective than usual. We are nearer now than ever before to the supreme source of heat—God. His love seems to become more comprehensive, more paternal, because of our extreme need.

(c) The sacraments:

They also can be considered special graces. The dispositions of the dying to receive them become extraordinarily excited, more than we could imagine. So much so that the sacraments fall on the soul like rain on land which is new-ploughed.

(d) The presence of our Lady and the saints:

These form a world of grace apart. Our Lady has a special interest in the death of those to whom she was and is a mother.

3. *The joys of death. Three glances of the just at that moment:*

(a) To the present:

God is present more than before; the joys of earth are leaving us little by little. Our very state makes it almost impossible for us to sin; there are some faults we cannot commit, others which are no longer attractive to us. This state is like the dawn of heaven.

(b) The past:

There are two things which will give us joy from our past life, fear and confidence.

i. *Fear of God.* The greater this reverential fear has been during life, the more joy it will give us when we are dying; if we want a really happy death, let us fear God without measure.

ii. *Confidence in God.* If we have had complete confidence in him it will now bring us great joy; we have never doubted him



for one moment, we have always abandoned ourselves to his greatness, confided in his goodness.

(c) The future:

i. *God is drawing near*; one more moment of this life and we shall see that his omnipotence is the only measure of his goodness.

ii. *The hope of being with Christ*: Heaven is only one thing—life with Christ for eternity.

iii. *Death more sweet than we thought or hoped for*. It will seem to us like a loving hand which is about to remove all our sufferings, crown our virtues, heal our miseries.

4. *Precious in his sight*:

(a) That is how the Scripture speaks of the death of the just (Ps. 115. 6).

(b) Blessed are those who die in the Lord (Apoc. 14. 13).

i. A just man is one who did the will of God during life;

ii. consolation through our abandonment to the will of Christ at this moment of death; our death, as it were, consecrated in his. God sees once more in our death that of his Son.

5. *Preparation for death*:

If we wish to die the death of the just we must prepare for it in life. It is not done in a flash. Works of piety and devotions are all very well, but they are not enough. Devotion to St Joseph, Patron of a happy death, to our Lady and the saints is good, but it is not enough. We must put our life at the service of God. That is the best preparation for death.

i. It is useful to avoid everything that might make us uneasy at the hour of death;

ii. we should avoid tepidity, neglect in the reception of the sacraments, loss of time, few almsdeeds, lack of penance and mortification;

iii. special mention should be made here of a worldly attitude and spirit;

iv. we can do many good things while we are well, but once we are ill... who knows what we shall be able to do then?

## E: The Lessons of death

1. *Death—our teacher in life*:

(a) At the moment of death we shall appreciate this life for what it really is. The life of the senses is finished now, and that of God approaches.

(b) But then it will be too late. Now, on the other hand, the thought of death might have its influence on the actions of our present life.

2. *Death will come*:

(a) All men have to die. Our Lady died; even Christ.

(b) It is as universal as sin, since it is the punishment for sin (Rom. 5. 12; 6. 23.)

(c) Those words of God to Adam apply to all men: You shall die. From that moment the life of every man is a journey towards death.

3. *It will come as a thief:*

(a) If the Master of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch, and not allowed his house to be broken open. And you, too, must stand ready; the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him (Matt. 24.43-44). St Paul repeats this (1 Thess. 5. 2).

(b) When ? how ? We can apply to death the words used by our Lord about his final coming at the end of the world. But as for that day and that hour you speak of, they are known to none, not even to the angels in heaven; only the Father knows them (Matt. 24. 36).

(c) It will take away from you everything except your works.

4. *The lessons of death:*

Three among many others :

(a) The vanity of creatures :

Let us judge of them now as we shall judge them then. They are means, not an end. We should use them in so far as they lead us to God.

(b) The life of grace:

i. Sanctifying grace is the only thing of interest at the moment of death; but your co-operation is necessary. Put your freedom at the service of grace; use the means to acquire it, to preserve it, to increase it.

ii. It gives an eternal value to our works.

(c) From this moment:

We must watch and pray as and from now !

5. *Exhortations :*

(a) Of what use will be my deeds, whether glorious or ignominious, when death can wipe them out with one stroke of his pen ? I will tell you. You, whoever you are, will have to abandon this world, to which your heart paid such homage. All that you longed for so eagerly has no value before God, to whom you belong. . . . Come forth, then, my soul, from the stupidity of your sins. Serve God, if not with your virtues, at least with your voice....

(b) Try to live in such a way that at the hour of your death you will rejoice rather than fear. Learn now to die to the world, that then you may begin to live with Christ (*Jmit.* 1. 23).

## F: Anointing of the Sick

### 1. *Jesus by the body of the daughter of the ruler:*

He will never abandon us at the crucial moments of our lives. He wishes at all times to give life to our souls.

(a) He was at our spiritual birth, because it is not Paul, or Peter who baptizes, but Christ;

(b) present when two lives were joined in one in matrimony.

(c) Will he be absent at the most difficult moment of all, that of our definitive passing from this life? No; he will be there, in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

### 2. *The elements of this sacrament:*

#### (a) They were described by one of his Apostles:

Is any one sick among you? . . . (James 5. 14). A sickness which implies danger of death, when, over and above the sorrows of the illness and its pains, we have to put our conscience in order and face the last assaults of the devil.

#### (b) Bring in the priests of the Church:

Why should we fear those who come to us in the name of Christ? We sent for the doctor, perhaps a lawyer—are you afraid of a visit which will always bring courage and peace to the sick person, since for that reason Christ instituted this sacrament? Yet how careless—or afraid—people can be! It is a great crime against those we pretend to love, to deprive them of the sacraments at such a time. They always lived a good life? God is the only judge of that, not man.

#### (c) Let them pray over him:

i. The priest prays, because the sacrament is made up of two parts, matter and form, the things used and the words said;

ii. but let the sick man also pray; the sacraments are the work of living men, not of stones. He must want to receive them, long to receive them if possible.

#### (d) Anointing him with oil:

In ancient times oil formed a part of most medicines, it was also used to anoint the bodies of athletes, from which came the two ideas of a healing ointment and the giving of strength, which lead us to think of the effects of this sacrament.

#### (e) The prayer . . . shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up:

The sacraments produce the effects they symbolize. Here the symbolism is very clear; a healing and a giving of strength. It is not a medicine against death, but a help to die well.

i. That is why its first effect is the giving of grace, help against temptations, strength to die in the peace of Christ and so save the soul.



ii. The forgiving of sins if there be any left to forgive after absolution. As confirmation completes and strengthens the effects of baptism, so Anointing of the Sick completes and perfects penance.

iii. The restoration of health if God sees that it is expedient. But we must not ask miracles of God unless we do our part. Therefore Anointing of the Sick should be given as soon as there is real danger of death. It can then play its part together with the medicines given by the doctor.

iv. Apart from any other reason, the peace of soul this sacrament brings helps the natural means of cure.

3. Therefore it should not be left till the last moment, or until the sick person is unconscious.

(a) It can be administered to those who are not conscious; even to those who are apparently dead; but what a pity not to take full advantage of it!

(b) Let us call Christ to our sick beds—nothing but good can come from such a visit.

G: Christ, the life of the soul

The way, the truth and the life

It is almost as though he addressed these words to us all as he stands at the bed of the daughter of Jairus, now brought back to life again.

*1. Life of the body:*

There are many passages in which St John and St Paul affirm that Christ is our life, and they are talking, not merely about our future resurrection, but of the present life of the soul.

*2. Life of the soul:*

(a) Because it is by nature immortal. But to this has been added the supernatural life of grace; without that the soul is still immortal, but it is dead. It still gives life to the body, but it has no real life itself.

(b) It is Jesus, through his grace, who gives us that life of soul.

To follow the truth, in a spirit of charity

That Pauline phrase (Eph. 4. 15) gives us a synthesis of our life in Christ.

*1. Following:*

That is doing, working; that which is not put into action, which does not act, is at the very least in a state of paralysis.

*2. The truth:*

The truth of our life consists in adjusting itself to the plan drawn up for it from all eternity in the divine mind.

3. *In a spirit of charity:*

That is, in a state of grace. The acts of a soul which is alive are divine, and to be so they must come from Christ, even though at present it may seem that our life is hidden in him, without any exterior manifestations of his presence or of his glory. Those vital acts of the spirit are knowledge and love.

(a) Let us know him; here by faith, later by vision in heaven. God is the light that illuminates our minds (John 1. 4).

(b) The people that walked in darkness . . . (John 9. iff.). The darkness of the shadow of death, because they did not even use the natural means given them to know God. These same saw a great light—they saw Christ, who still shines on all by his grace.

(c) We must also love—it is not enough to believe. Even supernatural faith without good works is dead.

i. The works of love are all-important, love for God and for his reflection in our neighbour.

ii. But the love of Christ, the action of charity in the soul, is a most worthy object of our love, since it infuses into our souls the grace which makes us capable of love and reaches the very intimate presence of God in the soul. Abide in me and I in you (John 15. 4). We will come to him and make our abode with him (John 14. 23).

## Conclusion

1. *Faith and love are acts inspired by each other:*

All are moved by the intrinsic principle of life, grace. That is the life of the soul.

2. *Until one day it reaches its perfection:*

Today in germ only, afterwards in full and immortal development. When? When Christ appears we shall be like him (1 John 3. 2).

## H: Confidence

### A consoling and necessary virtue

1. *The woman with the issue of blood and the daughter of Jairus:*

The central theme of this gospel is that of confidence. The crowds who surround him have confidence in him, although they do not yet know exactly what his treasure is, which they can discover. The woman has confidence in him; she knows what she is after and hopes to obtain it from Christ. More perfect even is the confidence of Jairus.

2. *The need for confidence:*

A necessary and a consoling virtue, more so in present circumstances, when men are every day more disillusioned by the deceits

and inconstancy of human values, and are hungry for Christ, in whom they can find a definitive solution.

### 3. *More than a virtue:*

Confidence is a condition of hope, according to St Thomas; it makes us certain of the help which is offered to us.

#### (a) Confidence in ourselves :

This is of the purely natural order and we shall not deal with it here. In the supernatural order we can only find confidence in ourselves when we look at our own miseries which are the throne for God's mercy'.

#### (b) Confidence in Christ:

A high example of this is given us in the gospel of today.

## Christian Confidence

This is necessary if we are to draw near to Christ.

### I. *Its conditions and essence:*

#### (a) Humility which recognizes our own misery and the insufficiency of human means:

- i. *The woman is convinced of her own state*—an incurable illness;
- ii. *of the fact that only Christ can help her*; the others will only take away what little money she has left, without being able to do anything to cure her. One is our Father and Shepherd who gives life to the sheep, even at the cost of his own. The rest are thieves and robbers.

iii. *Jairus*. The same can be said of him, who has had to overcome human respect to a greater extent than the woman, owing to his position in society.

#### (b) Confidence in Christ:

- i. *He does not ask for what we cannot give him*. And that is usually nothing but our faith and loyal service.
- ii. *The rest—all the rest—he gives* (2 Cor. 3. 4-5). To the woman, health; to Jairus, the resurrection of his daughter; to Mary at Cana, the first miracle. St Peter shows this confidence when he says: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life (John 6. 69).

### 2. *Its effects:*

We obtain what we seek:

#### (a) when it is good for us:

Both the petitioners in the gospel obtained their requests. He loves us sincerely and will give us all that we ask for our eternal salvation; both grace and glory—if we ask him.



(b) He will grant us what we ask for others, as he did to Jairus.

(c) He increases our confidence once we begin to have it:

He did in the case of the woman, because he allows her to see clearly that he knew what he was granting her. He tells her that her faith has obtained the request; he makes her cast off that fear which made her confidence imperfect.

## I: Enemies of confidence

### 1. *Confidence in Christ and its enemies:*

The idea of confidence stands out more clearly if we consider the enemies which attempt to cut us off from Christ. They are :

### 2. *Interior ones:*

(a) Through excess :

Too much confidence in our own goods. The woman with the issue of blood spent a long time relying on her wealth to pay doctors. The result was that she lost her capital but did not regain her health.

(b) Too much confidence in material goods:

i. money, position, power, talents, beauty . . . become idols in which human beings put their confidence;

ii. the great disillusionment of individuals and nations. This confidence is exactly described by Christ in the story of the rich man who proposed to increase the size of his barns (Luke 12.

(c) Excessive confidence in supernatural goods :

How many souls, both at the beginning of the life of sanctity and in the more perfect stages, have ruined everything because they have forgotten that the one rule in order to increase in that life of perfection is to lower oneself, not raise oneself—humility. Without me, says Christ to us all, you can do nothing.

(d) By defect:

i. our own misfortune and unhappiness;

ii. despair as to whether even Christ can remedy them, as happened to the servants of Jairus and the mourners ;

iii. being ashamed of revealing them as one ought and when one should. The woman with the issue of blood had imperfect confidence in this way.

(e) Reverential fear of Christ is not lack of confidence:

It is pleasing to God, because it contrasts our nothingness with the might of God. See St Peter, saying: Depart from me because I am a sinful man, O Lord (Luke 5. 8).

3. *The external order:*

(a) Here is a reflection for those Catholics who externally touch our Lord and who can become a real obstacle in the path of others who seek the truth and do not find it.

(b) The Jews who considered this sick woman impure; the priests who should have prepared the people of Israel for the coming of the Messiah, became instead an obstacle to the knowledge of him. Here is the real responsibility of those who work in the apostolate.

(c) The servants of Jairus; they are no longer near Christ; they have some confidence in him but they think that his power can only work up to certain limits; for sickness but not in case of death.

i. Like them, St Peter started to walk to Christ on the waters, but as his confidence left him he sank.

ii. St Paul urges those at Philippi to have confidence, because he is certain that the one who has started to work good in them will bring it to its conclusion safely.

(d) Complete lack of confidence—the case of the mourners. They did not believe that Christ could do anything in this case.

It is a grave danger for those who work in the apostolate and for many who are separated from God that they do not believe in the miracles which divine grace can do. Never should we despair of the conversion of a sinner, no matter how hardened. There may always be a moment for the entrance of grace into that soul.

## J: Christ, foundation of our hope

1. Christ is the same for ever; it is a great consolation to know that Christ was not just another historic figure who gave solutions to problems of his time and nothing else. Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and the same for ever. All things in all.

2. *Foundations of our hope in him:*

## (a) He is our mediator:

If the blood of the ancient sacrifices was valid for purification, what will that not do which has been shed by Christ, our mediator? (Heb. 9.12-14).

## (b) He has paid all our debt:

- i. his satisfaction is more than enough for the whole world, infinitely superior to the debt contracted by mankind;
- ii. these merits of his are given to us freely; all the treasures of Calvary are ours.

## (c) He cannot forget us:

The way he paid the debt is proof of his love, which has leapt over the barrier set up by death. In his very wounds he has carried us with him into the life of glory.

(d) Because he has given us his Church:

He has not left us orphans; a visible Church in whose hands he has left his treasures, sacraments, teaching authority, law's.

(e) Because he has given himself in the Eucharist:

We receive Jesus Christ himself, the bread of the strong; it is the sacrament of love and hope.

(f) Because Christ is still in heaven offering intercession for us (Heb. 7. 25):

He is still our High Priest, who offers still, through the ministry of his priests, the sacrifice of the new law of love.

(g) Because of the offices he performs for us:

- i. father of love;
- ii. shepherd of the flock;
- iii. the strong one, armed, keeping his court.

(h) Because he is the pledge of our victory over our enemies :

St Paul could therefore hurl the challenge, nothing could separate him from the love of Christ (Rom. 8. 35); in Christ he could do all things (Phil. 4. 13).

(i) Because all things are ours in Christ:

All the rest of creation has been made for man ; this takes on new and surprising motives in Christ.

(j) Because we can pray in his name :

And what we ask for will be granted (John 14. 13). We should think of the power of our prayer in the name of Christ.

(k) Because we are part of him, incorporated into his Body:

That is the secret of our omnipotence. It is not we who act, but Christ.

## K: This theme of confidence in the Book of Psalms

### The book of confidence in God

1. The God presented to us in the psalms is one who is omnipotent and merciful.
2. He is always near to those who invoke him sincerely.
3. The psalms show us that simple, humble and confident prayer always reaches the God of battles.

### The psalmist and his virtues

i. *The psalmist:*

(a) He always represents the cause of God ; in him all men of good will should see themselves portrayed.

(b) The man of upright and simple faith can always make his own the words of the psalmist. That is why the Church puts them daily on the lips of her priests.



2. *His virtues:*

Characteristic of the psalmist are his holiness of life, through fidelity to the commands of God; humility, through his knowledge of his own weakness and need, especially in regard to the power of his enemies; unlimited confidence in God, his Lord; his gratitude to God for benefits received. Some examples:

(a) sanctity and fidelity' (Ps. 8 ; 17.21 ff.);

(b) humility';

i. he is weak (Ps. 31 ; 130);

ii. in relation to the power of his enemies (Ps. 30);

(c) his spirit of prayer, seeing his weakness, he turns to God in humble confidence (Ps. 12; 17; 30);

• (d) complete confidence in God. Without limits—a few examples only (Ps. 10; 30).

## The effects of these psalms

1. They bring us comfort, joy and consolation (*e.g.* Ps. 17 and 30).

2. They lift up our minds and bring new strength to the will. In them one feels, as in few other parts of the Scriptures, the fatherhood of God our Lord, especially towards the just and the good.

(a) Thus Ps. 17.31,48,49,51.

(b) We see the great mercy of God sung over and over again (*e.g.* Ps. 30. 20 ff.).

(c) In Ps. 117 there is a triumphant hymn of the whole Church and of all Christians with her. From the very gates of eternity the Christian can look at the past, with all its dangers, and yet with all the triumphs too, due to the intervention of God. In anticipation he sings a hymn of praise and thanks to God for the eternal glory of heaven.

3. They are a source of spiritual energy and courage; they give us enthusiasm for the fight. They are a continual source of spiritual strength. Especially they are full of the sentiment of confidence in our God who can do all things, and will do all things to help us. Thus for example, Ps. 17 and 19, apart from Ps. 30 which we have already mentioned.

4. They teach us what should be the sentiments of Christian optimism; they can be summed up:

(a) sanctity of life, good will and the fulfilling of the divine commands;

(b) profound humility; lack of confidence in our own powers;

(c) unlimited confidence in the paternal *providence of God*;

(d) gratitude to God for favours received.

## Conclusion

The Christian, resting on the Rock who is Christ, should not be afraid to undertake great things for the kingdom of his Lord. The help will be there all the time.

### L: The Psalms—collective confidence

i. The plot of the nations against the Messiah and the punishment which God will inflict on them because of it. This has a universal application.

(a) Against God and his Anointed one—the verses of Ps. 2 might have been written for our use today.

(b) But against this plot God sees what is happening and his justice will deal with it (Ps. 13).

(c) He can even smile at it, so petty are the devices of men. What a terrible thing this smile of God must be (cf. Ps. 2 and 58).

(d) He can afford to wait; he is in no hurry to strike in his anger. This mystery of God's patience is explained by his paternity and his eternity (Ps. 10).

(e) The impatience of the psalmist is in contrast to this patience of God. He calls for justice, and here and now. God waits (Ps. 27. and 10).

(f) At times he will even complain that God does not seem to see the terrible things being inflicted on his loved ones (Ps. 34). He almost tries to awaken God, pointing out that people are laughing at him as the God of all creation (Ps. 82).

(g) But at the same time he sings the terror of God's punishments and the rigours of his justice (Ps. 9). God's enemies will be caught in their own trap (*ibid.*). Their feet will be caught in the very snare they have laid. The psalmist ends this psalm by begging God to teach human beings their true condition—they are only men!

#### 2. *The triumph of God:*

A hymn of confidence.

(a) God is the protector of his people, and there is nothing to fear, even though the whole of nature may be destroyed (Ps. 45).

(b) Our confidence must always be in God not in men (Ps. 61). All our strength is in his omnipotence and mercy.

(c) In God is mercy, power and happiness (Ps. 35).

(d) This God of hope will give us the victory over the nations (Ps. 46).

(e) For he is mercy itself (Ps. 58).

(f) He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Ps. 67). Against him none can stand.

## M: Prudent optimism

### The Christian as a good soldier of Christ

#### 1. *Sure hope of triumph:*

Even in the face of the greatest difficulties and evils, the good Christian must not despair; the good soldier of Christ must give battle, confident that the victor will be his no matter what happens.

#### 2. *Founded in Christ:*

There is no other foundation, except that of the merits, and infinite mercy of Christ.

#### 3. *A member of the mystical Body:*

The Christian must learn to appreciate the fact that he is a member of the mystical Body of Christ; we must insist on this idea so that in the modern world the men of action may remain faithful to their divine vocation.

## A Pauline programme

From the possible quotations, we may take just one, in which he sums up the whole idea of the conditions which have to be present in the members of the mystical Body. It is a programme for men of action.

#### 1. *The text:* Rom. 12. 4-5:

Each of us has one body with many different parts, and not all these parts have the same function; just so we, though many in number, form one body in Christ, and each acts as counterpart of another. The spiritual gifts we have differ, according to the special grace which has been assigned to each. . . . He goes on to make a short list of these graces.

2. He then goes on to give the fundamental rules which should govern our activity as members of this Body.

#### (a) *Unwearied in activity* . . . (v. 11):

The Catholic must be active, a man of action.

- i. Do his duty faithfully, spiritual and temporal, in the office, workshop, wherever it may be.
- ii. Make good use of his time; in organized work for God.

#### (b) *aglow with the Spirit* . . .

The modern world needs men of charity, ardent charity. It is this charity which shows itself on the surface of the soul like the bubbles on the surface of boiling water. That joy and decision to give himself to great things for God.

#### (c) *waiting like slaves upon the Lord* . . .

This is worth meditation.



- i. The Christian must know that he is not serving a master, a lord, a patron, a temporal authority;
- ii. not even a union or political party;
- iii. but his master is God—he must be an apostle of the truth and nothing but the truth.

(d) buoyed up by hope . . .

This covers the themes concerning confidence we have already-set out but it also includes that of hope which is, at one and the same time, joyful.

(c) patient in affliction . . .

Patience which is not a mere crossing of the arms and waiting until God does something; but an active defence against enemies. Patience, says St Thomas, is the virtue which defends the good of reason against sadness. The enemies are many and powerful, but there is no need to fear them, if God is with us.

(f) persevering in prayer . . .

i. In his commentary of the former texts St Thomas says that the Pauline programme is a very difficult one to fulfil by human standards. But the secret of success lies in this last admonition. We must persevere in prayer. We must catch up new strength from prayer so that our action itself may become a prayer in its turn. We must store up energy, keep in contact with the source and centre of our strength, if we would overcome these enemies and carry out this programme.

ii. This simple reliance on the spiritual forces is what gives our human activity its interior vital force. We shall do nothing without it—at least, nothing worth while. We must allow our Lord to speak to us and encourage us, never being afraid to retire from the noise and bustle of the daily battle to take our place at his side in the Tabernacle. There we shall find our strength to carry the fight once again into the streets.

iii. There are many texts of St Paul in which this is reflected in the form of a shout of triumph. He says that there is nothing which can tear us away from the love of Christ—not tribulation, persecution or anything like that (Rom. 8. 35).

iv. I can do all things in him who strengthens me, that should be the standard carried by the apostles of Christ throughout the world.

*Last Sunday in October*

## CHRIST, THE KING

### SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Colossians i. 12-20

Gospel: John 18. 33-37

Texts which can be referred to the kingly dignity of Christ

#### I. *The Psalms:*

There are so many in this book that it would be impossible to quote them all. We shall give the main ones only.

Here on Mount Sion, my sanctuary, I enthrone a king of my own choice. Mine to proclaim the Lord's edict; how he told me, Thou art my son, I have begotten thee this day. Ask thy will of me and thou shalt have the nations for thy patrimony; the very ends of the world for thy domain. 2. 6-9.

Grant to the king, O God, thy own skill in judgement; the inheritor of a throne, may he be just, as thou art just; may he give thy people right awards . . . He will give the poor redress when they cry to him, destitute folk, with none to befriend them; in their need and helplessness, they shall have his compassion. Their lives he shall take into his keeping, set them free from the power of wrong and oppression, dearly avenge their blood. . . . In him all the tribes of the earth shall be enriched, all the nations shall extol him. 71. 1-2, 12-17.

Mine is a king who reigned before time was; here on earth he was the means to bring deliverance. 73. 12.

Thou who art enthroned above the cherubim, reveal thyself to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses; exert thy sovereign strength, and come to our aid. 79. 3-20. Cf. 95. 4-10.

To the Master I serve the Lord's promise was given, Sit here at my right hand while I make thy enemies a footstool under thy feet. The Lord will make thy empire spring up like a branch out of Sion; thou art to bear rule in the midst of thy enemies. From birth, princely state shall be thine, holy and glorious; thou art my son, bom like dew before the day-star rises. 109.1-3. Cf. 98. 1, 9; 96. 1-6.

#### 2. *The prophetical and sapiential Books:*

For our sakes a child is born, to our race a son is given, whose shoulder will bear the sceptre of princely power. What name shall be given him? Peerless among counsellors, the mighty God, Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace. Ever wider shall

his dominion spread, endlessly at peace; he will sit on David's kingly throne, to give it lasting foundations of justice and right; so tenderly he loves us, the Lord of Hosts. Isaias 9. 6-7. Cf. 6. 5.

Every knee shall bow before me, and every tongue sw'car by my name. Then shall men say of the Lord, that redress and dominion come from him; all those who rebelled against him shall appear in his presence abashed. Through the Lord the whole race of Israel shall be righted and brought to honour. Isaias 45. 24-26. Cf. 11. 4; 32. 8.

Nay, a time is coming, the Lord says, when I will raise up, from the stock of David, a faithful scion at last. The land shall have a king to reign over it, and reign over it wisely, giving just sentence and due reward. Jer. 23. 5.

Then I saw in my dream, how one came riding on the clouds of heaven, that was yet a son of man; came to where the Judge sat, crowned with age, and was ushered into his presence. With that, power was given him, and glory, and sovereignty; obey him all must, men of every race and tribe and tongue; such a reign as his lasts for ever, such power as his the ages cannot diminish. Dan. 7. 13-14. Cf. Zach. 14. 16.

### 3. *In the Gospel:*

Where is he that has been bom, the king of the Jews ? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him. Matt. 2. 2.

Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king is coming to thee, humbly, riding on an ass, on a colt whose mother has born the yoke. Matt. 21. 5 (Zach. 9. 9).

Then the King will say to those who are on his right hand, Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father.... Matt. 25. 34.

But Jesus came near and spoke to them; All authority in heaven and on earth, he said, has been given to me.. . . Matt. 28. 18.

He shall be great, and men will knowr him for the Son of the Most High; the Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob eternally; his kingdom shall never have an end. Luke 1. 32-33.

We have discovered, they said, that this man is subverting the loyalty of our people, forbids the payment of tribute to Caesar and calls himself Christ the king. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews ? He answered him, Thy owm lips have said it. . . . And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Luke 23. 2-3, 42.

Then Nathanael answered him, Thou, Master, art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. John 1. 49. Cf. 5. 21-22.

Thou art no friend to Caesar, if thou dost release him; the man who pretends to be a king is Caesar's rival. . . . Shall I crucify your king ? We have no king, the chiefpriests answered, except Caesar....



## LAST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER

And the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate, Thou shouldst write, this man said I am the King of the Jews. John 19. 12, 15, 21.

### 4. *In the writings of the Apostles:*

Cf. Acts 2. 36; 4. 12; 10. 38. i Cor. 15. 25. Phil. 2. 10. Col. 1.13.

God will reveal him in due time, the blessed God who alone enjoys dominion; he is the King of kings, the Lord of lords ... to him be glory and everlasting empire. 1 Tim. 6. 15-16.

... and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, first-born of the risen dead, who rules over all earthly kings ... Apoc. 1. 5.

And this title is written on his cloak, over his thigh, The King of kings and the Lord of lords. Apoc. 19. 16.

## SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

### I. LITURGICAL

#### 1. *The royal dignity of Christ:*

The Feast is of recent institution, being proclaimed by Pius XI in 1925. However, the expression of the regal dignity of Christ is common in the ancient liturgies. The Holy Sacrifice and the divine office are a solemn tribute which the Church offers daily to Christ because he is a priest and a King (Schuster).

2. Any part of the liturgical seasons will give preachers an opportunity to develop the theme of the kingdom of Christ, so frequently does it appear in the liturgy.

#### (a) Advent:

On practically every Sunday of Advent the Church describes the kingly power of the Messiah who is to come. He sits above the Cherubim, he rules Israel; it is he who will save all peoples and nations. The favourite quotation is that of Zach. 9.9 which announces the coming of the King, who is both just and a saviour.

#### (b) Christmas:

It may be the feast of the humble birth of Christ in a stable; but from the very first Vespers, the Church insists that it is the Prince of Peace who is coming to this world; one who will sit on the throne of David (Isaias 9. 6 ff).

#### (c) Epiphany:

When the idea of this new Feast was first suggested, Pius XI consulted as to the best time of the year to celebrate it. The reply of many liturgists was that the most suitable of all would be the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany. This feast commemorates the kingship of Christ, adored by the Wise Men. The Introit is a song of praise to the King of the world.

## (d) The Passion :

Even though the Church concentrates her attention on the sufferings of Christ, she is ever more aware as time goes on that it is our King who is suffering for us. She sings the *Vexilla Regis*, of a tree *ornata regis purpura*. Palm Sunday comes in this period of the liturgy; the King coming, in humility, seated on an ass, but acclaimed by the people in his royal dignity.

## (e) Easter:

Ending as it does with the glorious ascension of Christ into his eternal kingdom, for his crowning before the angels and saints as King of heaven and earth, one to whom all power and authority is given.

3. *The Feast of the Kingship of Christ:*

All the formulas of the Mass and office express the profound theological significance of the royal dignity of Christ:

(a) the foundation of this kingdom (Preface);

(b) its triple universality, from sea to sea (Gradual); over all nations and kings (*ibid.*), a universal power which shall never be taken away (*ibid.*);

(c) the characteristics of this kingdom are also mentioned :

i. a kingdom of truth and life;

ii. a kingdom of holiness and grace;

iii. a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

(d) Lastly there is mention of the two eras of this kingdom, one on earth, of suffering and humiliations; the other in heaven, in glory at the end of time (Introit).

## II. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

## A: The Epistle: Colossians 1. 12-20

The passage appointed for today is full of dogmatic meaning, a fact which makes us spend rather more time and space on it than usual.

1. *Occasion and argument:*

St Paul, in his captivity, knows, from Epaphras, the founder of the Church of the Colossians in Phrygia (Asia Minor), that certain teachers had appeared in that community who were teaching a doctrine with no foundation; also of certain philosophies which were of a purely carnal origin, probably a mixture of the Jewish religion and certain ideas common in Phrygia about the angels, to the visions and revelations of whom they gave themselves up, reaching the point where they placed them above Christ, the Head, making them out to be the principal intermediaries between God and man.

The supreme dignity of Christ is in danger, and St Paul rushes

to the defence, so as to make it quite clear that Christ—and Christ alone—is the King over all men—and angels!

The division of this passage is a simple one. Christ is the head, the universal head. As Creator this is his privilege over all nature; as God made Man, Redeemer of all, he is the Head of the whole Church.

When he speaks to us of the invisible image and of the prerogatives of Christ, we must be careful not to attribute to him too accurate a classification of the attributes which pertain to each of Christ's natures, because for Paul Christ is one.

## 2. *Texts:*

(a) Thanking God our Father for making us fit to share the light which saints inherit, for rescuing us from the power of darkness, and transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

Here are four ideas which are very Pauline :

i. the thanksgiving to God, to whom he applies the election and predestination of the chosen ones of Christ—this thanks is given to the Father because he is the principle of the Son, our Redeemer;

ii. thanks for our election, free entirely, which took us away from the condemnation which should have been ours;

iii. for that fact that he chose us to partake of the inheritance of the saints. Heaven is Christ's inheritance, and through him, that of his brothers, the saints, or Christians (Rom. 8. 17).

iv. the kingdom of light—that of Christ—as opposed to the kingdom of darkness, of the devil.

(b) The redemption that sets us free from our sins . . .

The angels cannot be mediators, because the individual application of pardon for our sins is given to us by Christ.

Paul is about to develop this argument very deeply : Christ is the head of all things, including the angels, because all have been created by him, for him; also all rest in him.

Truly Christ is:

(c) the true likeness of God . . .

He has reached the heights that dominate the picture of Christ, Redeemer. The God we cannot see is a typical Jewish concept: No one can see God and live, was a saying among them. This was the one thing, according to the Jews, which really distinguished God from idols. Christ is the visible image of this invisible God, dwelling among us. Here is a part of the doctrine of the Trinity perfectly explained. Christ is the image of the Father because he has the same nature as the Father, he is his Son—and the sons reproduce the parents. We may add more; the ordinary image merely reproduces; but in the case of Christ it is the same nature which runs through



him and the Father. Christ is, therefore, the Head of all creation, first of all because he is equal to the Father, God as he is, creator as he is. Once he takes flesh he will be the natural king of all creation; his very condition as God-Man gives him the right to assume all power and authority.

(d) first birth which precedes every act of creation . . .

The first title we have already mentioned, that of Image of God, puts him in relation to the Father merely; therefore Paul goes on to explain the action of Christ with regard to created things. The full meaning is given in the words which follow: In him all created things took their being, heavenly and earthly, visible and invisible; what are thrones and dominions, what are principedoms and powers? They were all created through him and in him; he takes precedence over all, and in him all subsist.

The dogma is profound and yet necessary, obviously, for the purpose of Paul's letter. All things were created by Christ because in his divine nature he—as God—is alone capable of creation. For him, because God is the end of all things that are made. He is the King for whom the world was made as a throne. All things for Christ, and through Christ for the Father.

They were created in him: the phrase is easy to understand in the supernatural order, because we live in Christ (1 Cor. 15. 22), we are justified in him (Gal. 2. 16) and the grace we receive is his, who merited it and distributed it to us of his fulness. We are his body.

(d) visible and invisible; what are thrones and dominions...?

The primacy of Christ over the angels is the very purpose of this epistle, and the same thing is mentioned in that to the Ephesians for the same reason. We have the basic doctrine again in Heb. 1. 2-4. But his divinity and creative power are not the only reasons why the angels must submit to him. At the very moment when he came into the world as Son of God made man, the Father issued his decree: Let all the angels of God adore him (*ibid.* 6). But just as a man can acquire honours on different titles, so Christ, by becoming obedient unto death, merited a name that was above all others, that before him every knee should bow, angels as well as men (Phil. 2. 10).

It would appear certain, then, that the supremacy of Christ over the angels is not merely a question of his divinity; there is something more, something he has earned by his merits as God made man.

3. *Christ and the Church:*

Briefly, because the main ideas have already been explained. Having given the reasons why Christ is the head of all creation because of his divine nature and his creative ability, Paul now passes on to a new creation—that of the Church, in which Christ has a new activity as its head. The titles are the same, namely, the fact that he is God, that he is the cause of all supernatural life, etc.

### He is that head whose body is the Church:

For Paul there is only one Church—the universal Church. He describes its organization (i Cor. io. 17, 12. 12; Eph. 1. 22-23; 4. 15-16; Col. 2. 19; Rom. 12. 4-5).

#### 4. *Christ's kingdom* :

(a) He is a king by natural right, since he is the image of the living God. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him and he is God made Man.

(b) A King by inheritance, a title which he has received as the natural Son of God, which he has from all eternity.

(c) King by title of dominion, since he is the creator.

(d) King by right of conquest. He won this title on the Cross, freed the human race from the dominion of Satan and won it for his own (Col. 2. 15).

## B: The Gospel: John 18. 33-37

### I. *General explanation* :

In the paved courtyard called the Lithostrotos of the Antonia Tower Pilate had his tribunal. A circular table for the chair of the procurator, with sufficient space for his assistants around it. Since the Jews would not go into the courtyard, the procurator came outside to receive them and their accusation. This had been well studied and, presuming that a Roman would have little interest in a purely religious issue, they accused Jesus primarily of a political crime. When this failed they had recourse to another, of a religious nature; that he had claimed to be the Son of God. When they found that this, too, was of little use they were forced to try another. They return to their first motive, but this time with a threat; he claimed to be king, and unless you have him crucified for it we shall denounce you to Caesar.

We are in the first stages of the trial. Pilate, at the entrance to the courtyard, receives the accused and hears the accusation; this is left out by St John but recorded by St Luke. We have discovered, they said, that this man is subverting the loyalty' of our people, forbids the payment of tribute to Caesar, and calls himself Christ the king.

The accusation was a dangerous one, because it presented Jesus as leader of a revolt similar to that of Judas the Galilean, but it was not enough to carry any weight with Pilate, whose police must have been well informed about the activities of Christ. For this reason he is content with a simple questioning of the prisoner, before declaring him innocent. So Pilate went back into the palace, and summoned Jesus. He placed him before him, standing, while Pilate sat at the judicial table to comply with the law. Art thou the king of the Jews, he asked? But Jesus wants Pilate to reveal what he knows full well,

namely that Christ was innocent. Therefore he says to him: Dost thou say this of thy own accord, or is it what others have told thee of me ?

Riciotti, in his *Life of Christ*, sees another meaning. According to him, Pilate's question implies: Are you a king in one of those other-world meanings given to the Messiah by the writers of your own nation, or in the sense in which I understand the word ? The reply of Jesus then means: Who has spoken to you of this? Pilate answers, Am I a Jew? It is thy own nation, and its chief priests, who have given thee up to me ? What offence hast thou committed ? Whatever may be the true meaning of these questions and answers, one thing is clear. Christ wishes to explain the true meaning of his kingdom so that it may be plain that there is no truth in the charge brought against him. Therefore he explains that he is a king, but that his kingdom is not an earthly one in the usual sense of the word. If it had been he would have had armies to defend him. I am a king, but king of truth, who have come to preach that truth. My subjects are those who hear it.

Pilate, tired of academic discussion, typical of the pragmatic Roman military caste, simply says: Truth ? Who knows what that is ? And leaves Jesus, thus depriving us of a divine definition of truth !

### Some commentaries on the kingdom of Christ

#### i. *St Thomas Aquinas {Com. in Ev. Joannis}*:

##### (a) My Kingdom is not of this world:

The word *kingdom* at times stands for the subjects, at others for the royal power. In the first sense his kingdom is made up of the faithful who are in the world, but not of the world, since they have been translated to the kingdom of grace from that of darkness. In the second sense the kingdom of Christ, namely his royal power, is not of this world, nor has it been granted to him by the people; he has received it from the Father. The first interpretation is that of Augustine, the second that of Chrysostom.

Continuing the first meaning, Christ affirms that he has come into the world to conquer the kingdom of the faithful, showing them the truth about himself. In the second, certainly he is a king, anointed to that office eternally, and for that reason he has come into the world, to teach this fact.

##### (b) The subjects:

Christ, -who had called himself a shepherd, now says that he is a king, and just as before he had claimed that his sheep knew his voice, so now he says that those who are of the truth hear him. Who are those who, by admitting the truth, recognize his kingdom? Everyone who listens to the father and learns, comes to me (John 6. 45).



We all belong to God, created by him and subject to his dominion; but only some belong to him with love and the desire to imitate him. These are the true sons of God and truth.

2. *Cornelius à Lapede:*

Christ, as man, had a double empire on earth, namely, that of the Church which he organized in the form of a society, and also that which he had from the moment of his conception over all nations, even though he retains the right and renounces its use. He can depose kings, etc.

It may be noted that this supreme dominion can be threefold; the highest being that of God over creatures, the least, that of kings, and a middle power, that of Christ as man, which is superior to any earthly power because of its divine origin, its unbreakable firmness and its extension, over all men and angels. All power and authority was given him in heaven and on earth.

3. *Dehaut:*

The origin of his kingdom is heavenly<sup>7</sup>, its extent is not limited to the present life, but embraces all eternity, its purpose is not the enjoyment of passing goods, but those which are permanent; it is only established on earth so that it may lead us to heaven, to which it directs our thoughts, ways and hopes, and where it will receive its perfection. A kingdom which appears as weak as Christ, bound hand and foot, and yet which has the strength of God. In order to belong to this kingdom it is necessary<sup>7</sup> to hear the voice of truth, preached by nature, revelation, the inspirations of grace, and the priests. Men who are puffed up with vain human speculations or pow'er, as was Pilate, do not hear it.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

#### Christ, the First-born

We are reconciled to God by him.

#### 1. *Our redemption*

He is not content to show us the fact of our reconciliation, but also the manner of it, when he says: Making peace with them through his blood, shed on the cross (Col. 1. 20). In that phrase he shows us, first of all, the enmity which existed, since reconciliation was necessary; then he goes on to say that it was effected by his blood.. .. Wonderful indeed was that reconciliation, but even more so the way in which it was done, by God himself, and by the shedding of his blood on the cross. Let us, then, marvel at five things, the

fact that he reconciled us with God, that he did it himself by his death, and that on a cross. . . . He used no words, he gave himself instead.

## 2. *A kingdom of peace:*

How are we to understand what he says about making peace with all things, whether on earth or in heaven? It is easy to see the need for peace on earth, but is there war in the heavens? Are they divided? Yes, in war against man, taking up arms on seeing their God defiled and vilified. That is why Paul can say that all things on earth and in heaven have been restored in Christ. How can that be? He brought peace to the heavens by taking man there and handing him over to the angels, who hated him. He not only pacified the earth, but made the enmity of our enemies disappear. We have now seen the angels on earth once more, because a man is in heaven.

Do you want to know the anger of the angels against us and how they were our enemies? Look at them, then, sent to chastise the Israelites; against David and Sodom, a vision of death. But not now. They sing in happiness in the heavens and are sent by God to men and men to them. . . . If we have an angel ever at our side, let us behave modestly, as if we had a teacher ever with us, because the devil is there also, and for that reason we ask for the angel of peace, peace for ever.

## 3. *Peace with men:*

See how the bishop salutes you, saying: Peace be with you, peace with all. Of what use is it to be at peace with our friends only? The body is not healthy unless all its parts are in harmony; the mind unless all its thoughts are at rest. Nor is the world, unless we all live in peace. So much is this peace a fruit of the kingdom of Christ that those who promote it are truly called the sons of God (Matt. 5. 45). For that very reason Christ came, to bring peace to all things on the earth and in the heavens. If then the peacemakers are the sons of God, those who insist on discussing vain things are the sons of the devil. . . . There are many who rejoice in evil and destroy the body of Christ more effectively than the soldier's lance and the nails of his executioners. That was a lesser evil compared with this, because the broken members came together again, but those who separate themselves now, will not return unless we seek them out; they will remain separated for ever. When you wish to fight against your brother, remember that you are fighting against a member of Christ, and put aside your anger.

## 4. *Authority in the Church:*

Christ is the one who deigns to speak to you through us, and even if at one time we may have been without his grace, we do not lack it now, for your benefit; because if the grace of God, for the benefit

of the Israelites, spoke to them through the mouth of an ass (Num. 22. 28), it is obvious that it will not refuse to act through us for your good.

Let no one say, thinking of me, that I am imperfect, abject and without merits. It is true, but God, in deference to the common good, is accustomed to support such as I. And if you doubt it, see how he deigned to speak to Cain about Abel, to the devil for Job, . . . even Caiphas, the assassin of Christ, and a sinful man, uttered prophecy, in deference to his dignity as priest.... Do not be surprised, then, if a man who is promoted to some dignity, and who is accused of innumerable crimes, is not led to judgement until he has laid down his office. With much more reason the grace of God works through the spiritual teacher, while he is such, because otherwise the whole social order would perish. But once he has laid it down or is dead, then he receives more severe punishments.... You do not despise me, but the priesthood. You may despise me, if you so choose, when you see me deprived of that dignity, even though, in that case, I would not be in command over you. But while I am seated on this throne, while I command, I must have that authority and power, no matter how unworthy you may deem me to be. If the chair of Moses was worthy of veneration, and if they were worthy to be heard who sat upon it, much more so the throne which we have received from Christ, from which we address you and exercise the ministry of reconciliation.

Royal legates dress themselves with honours when they visit foreign regions. We are God's legates who, with the whole of our episcopal dignity, come to plead with you to live in peace with you, brethren, promising you the kingdom of heaven and an eternal life with God.

## II. ST AUGUSTINE

(In many parts of his writings he draws up for us, in isolated sentences, the whole of the doctrine which the modern Popes have explained with regard to the regal dignity of Christ.)

### i. *He is anointed:*

David was anointed as king, because in those days only two classes of people were anointed, priests and kings, who were figures of him who was to perform both of these offices. Christ received his name from Chrism, and not only was he anointed who is our head, but we also, his body. He is a king because he rules over us and leads us.

God anointed by God . . . and with what oil except that which is spiritual and invisible ?... He was anointed God for our sake and sent for our sake, and so as to be able to receive that anointing he became man, in such a way that he did not put off his divinity.



God made Man, and therefore God anointed by God became Man and Christ.

2. *A king who rules in justice:*

A sceptre of justice which directs men who were twisted from the right path, longing to reign over themselves, egoists and lovers of their sins... it will be his rod which rules you, a straight rod, because he is called a king from the act of ruling, and he does not rule who does not direct. That is why he is our king, the king of those who act aright, for just as the priests receive their name from the fact that they sanctify us, so the king from the act of ruling us.... Do you live a twisted life? Draw near to this sceptre of righteousness, namely Christ, your king, and direct yourself with his inflexible rule.

3. *King by right of conquest:*

He is a true king, whose title was written above the cross by Pilate. There, over his head, it was placed: Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews, and in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, so that all might read it, both the glory of this king and the shame of the Jews, who rejected their true king in favour of Caesar. . . . They thought they had destroyed utterly him whom they crucified, but it was then, on the cross, that he was paying the price to purchase the entire world. . . . We belong, therefore, to the one who redeemed us, who overcame the world for us, not in the armour of a soldier, but on a shameful cross.

4. *The reign of Christ and that of Satan:*

So that no one might think that the kingdom of Christ has been divided once the lost sheep leave the flock, Jesus said: He that is not with me is against me. Notice that he does not say, He that does not bear my name, or he that bears only a semblance of my mysteries, but he that is not with me. Everyone who is not with Christ is against him; not that his kingdom is divided, but that men have tried to divide it. He who does not leave aside iniquity does not belong to the kingdom of the Lord, even though he may bear the name of Christian, and to give you an example, I would say that all those who live dominated by the spirit of avarice or lust. . . belong to the kingdom of Satan, like those who worship idols. . . . Pagans, heretics, the vicious . . . all these belong to the kingdom of Satan, which cannot stand against that of Christ.

5. *The victory of the present time is a sign of that to come:*

The *Ennaratio in Ps.* 109 is longer than usual. Its argument is:

(a) The promises already fulfilled are a pledge of the fulfilment of those in the future.

(b) We have been promised the glorious kingdom of Christ and a kingdom over his enemies in this world.

(c) We are seeing the fulfilment of the second half of this promise; later we shall see the first half, in the definite and final triumph of the Lord.

6. *The victory of Christ:*

Let peoples roar against him, let foolish nations meditate vain things, let the kings of the earth arise and join in conspiracy against the Lord and his Christ. Will their roars and stupid thoughts, their conspiracies against him prevent the fulfilment of his promise that: I will give you the nations of the earth for your inheritance and into your possession the whole of the world ?

7. *The kingdom of Christ made man:*

God will extend your powerful sceptre from Sion. Obviously this kingdom which was promised to Christ is not that which he has as the Word of God, together with the Father, for this latter is eternal. Was it not given to him who is the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, in honour and glory for all ages ?

Christ, in so far as he is one with the Father, invisible and incorruptible, as the Word, Power and Wisdom, is God in God, by whom all things were made, the King of ages ; yet that other kingdom of his, to which, once he was made flesh, he called us to eternity, begins with Christianity, but it will have no end... .

He began his kingdom from Sion when he preached penance and the remission of sins, beginning in Jerusalem. And what will happen once his powerful sceptre has been extended from Sion? In the first place, that he will have dominion over his enemies. And will he not have dominion over his enemies when his saints enter into glory and the wicked are condemned ?... But not merely that, his sceptre has been extended so that he may have dominion over them here and now, in this procession of the centuries and succession of the human race....

The powerful ones of the earth made every effort to wipe out the name of Christianity and they failed, because, As for the stone, when a man falls against it, he will break his bones; when it falls upon him, it will scatter him like chaff (Matt. 21. 44). These evil men came up against the stone of proof and they were crushed when they said: Who is this Christ? A Jew, a poor Galilean who was killed in this way or in that. Woe to you; you had before you a small pebble, under your feet a tiny stone, humble and minute; but you stumbled over it and fell, and in falling you were crushed. If that is his hidden anger, what will that be which he will show when he comes to judge in public? This stone breaks your bones when you fall over it and on to it; it crushes when it falls on you.

## SECTION IV. THEOLOGIANS

## I. ST THOMAS AQUINAS

## The regal dignity of Christ

(In the time of St Thomas the theme of the royal dignity of Christ was not proposed for study in the same way as it is nowadays, especially after the institution of this new Feast. However, scattered over the *Summa* there are ample statements to cover all the theological points which it raises. Taking as our guide the Encyclical *Quas Primas* of Pius XI we shall give a summary of these statements of the Angelic Doctor. In this way we shall have a dogmatic synthesis which may be of use to preachers on this theme. Because of the importance of this theology we shall give rather more space to it than usual.)

## Christ, the King

Pius XI gives in the Encyclical two titles for the kingship of Christ, the Hypostatic Union and the Redemption. St Thomas adds two others, the fact that he is the Head of the human race and the plenitude of grace in Christ.

1. *A King by right of nature:*

Judiciary power is a consequence of regal dignity. . . . Christ had this dignity by the very fact of being the Son of God. To make it quite clear that here he means God made man, he goes on: It is a question of the judiciary power or regal dignity in so far as this is due to Christ through his union with the Word.

2. *Because of his dignity as our head:*

In the 3P, q. 58, a. 2 and 3 St Thomas proves that the judiciary power of Christ is due to his position as our Head; but this power is only a consequence of the regal dignity of Christ. There is another way of reaching the same conclusion. Christ is the head of all men, and this concept contains all the elements of kingship, with one addition, namely, the vital influence on the members. Thus we see that Christ is the king of all those of whom he is the head, but that he is not necessarily the head of all those over whom he is king; thus he is king over the damned as well, but he is not their head.

3. *How Christ is our head—the different grades of membership:*

- i. Mainly he is the head of those who are united with him in glory;
- ii. of those who are united with him by sanctifying grace;
- iii. of those who are united to him by faith alone;
- iv. of those who are not actually united with him at the moment, but who will be, one day;



v. of those who are not at the moment united to him nor will they ever be, because they have not been chosen. These cease to come under his influence as their head at the moment of death.

4. *King through the plenitude of grace:*

This is another title to the judiciary power and therefore to the regal dignity. St Thomas's doctrine is both clear and simple;

(a) Christ had the very" fulness of grace ; in the first place because he had it in the highest possible grade; secondly because he had to pass it on to all those who are his members ; thirdly because he had it with all the effects and operations of grace, such as the virtues and gifts in the highest degree (q. 7. a. 9).

(b) This fulness is proper to Christ.... There is another which is relative, possessed by others according to their capacity and office. Thus our Lady receives the title, Stephen and other saints (a. to).

5. *King by right of conquest:*

This is one of the titles of which Pius XI speaks in the Encyclical. It is also mentioned in the Preface of the Mass. St Thomas affirms it, and also that it is meritorious, while the former titles are gratuitous. The points he makes which are most interesting and useful for preaching are :

(a) the passion, the redemption of man:

This was superabundant for all the crimes and penalties of the human race. It was, as it were, the price paid for our sins and the debt of punishment. All satisfaction, whether for oneself or for another, is a price paid to justice. Christ paid, not in money, but with himself. His passion is our redemption (q. 48. a. 4).

(b) he freed us from the power of Satan:

Satan had power over men in three ways :

- i. through man's sin, by which he deserved to be handed over to Satan who overcame him through temptation;
- ii. from the point of view of God, offended by sin, who had therefore the right to hand man over to the devil;
- iii. from the point of view of Satan himself, who through his evil will, separated man from his God.

With regard to the first way, Christ freed us because he was the cause of the pardon of our sins; the second, because he reconciled us to God; the third, because the devil misused the power granted him by God and devised the death of Christ, who had never sinned (q. 49. a. 2).

6. *Christ, King, priest and legislator:*

Head of the Church. Christ had their perfection as King, Priest and legislator—thus

are usually distributed among the

7. *The kingdom of Christ :*

(a) is not temporal—because he did not wish it. He has the power over all things, but he who came to lead men to God did not choose to use this temporal power.

(b) it is universal—but some things will not be submitted to it until the end of time. All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.

(a) it is interior—constituted by interior acts, but also by exterior ones in so far as they are the consequence of interior acts.

(d) a kingdom of truth—because God is the truth, because his intellect is the measure of all things. God is the supreme truth.

(e) a kingdom of sanctity—through his influence on the will of men to make them accept the will of God;

(f) a kingdom of grace—he reigns in the hearts of men because :

- i. he has grace and holiness in the highest degree;
- ii. he shares this with men, joining them to God;
- iii. because he has been loved more than any other man.

8. *Explanation of the words of the prophecy of Isaias :*

(a) For our sakes a child is born . . .

We are shown the humility of Christ, who chose to become as a little child.

(b) to our race a son is given . . .

The power and excellence of his dominion; since the humility of Christ is joined to the divinity of the Word as its instrument, it has omnipotent power. For which reason the prophet speaks frequently of his ineffable dominion and singular power.

(c) whose shoulder will bear the sceptre of princely power...

The solidity and security of this power of Christ.

(d) peerless among counsellors . . .

Peerless because of his power and the admiration that should be ours at the sight of his humility and poverty; counsellor, because of his infinite wisdom, so necessary for all kings. He has no need of advice from others because of his wisdom.

(e) the mighty God . . .

Because the reign of Christ takes its influence from the divine power, which was in him personally. He made use of this power in his passion, when he answered the Jews who sought him: I am he, and they fell to the ground.

(f) Father of the world to come . . .

A new condition of his royal power; the sweetness of his reign. We can refer it to the fulness of grace, by which and through which those who share in it carry the yoke without difficulty. There is no need for the rod of iron for such as these.



(g) *prince of peace . . .*

*The tranquillity of his reign. If not bodily peace, at least peace of soul; that is the peace which he left us through his death.*

## II. ST BONAVENTURE

### *The Graces necessary to enter the kingdom*

**file** *shall give a very 'brief summary' of the main thoughts in his work The Kingdom of God in the Parables of the Gospel—a work which should be better known. It is a wonderful description of the kingdom of heaven and of what is necessary to attain it.)*

*It is impossible to attain to the kingdom of glory' without grace, and there are four kinds of grace:*

#### *I. Baptismal grace, the door by which we enter:*

*We need this grace because we are born sons of anger and we have to be reconciled with God. There are three things necessary to preserve this baptismal grace:*

*(a) faith—without which it is impossible to please God;*

*(b) love—of Christ, of God and of our neighbour;*

*(c) imitation of Christ, which means the fulfilment of the law, the commandments. Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord... but he that doth the will of my Father... .*

#### *2. Penitential grace:*

*Also required.... Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand. In sin, by which we are cast out of the kingdom, there is some voluntary' pleasure; therefore there must be some pain which is voluntarily inflicted. Therefore it is said of this kingdom that the violent bear it away. This is a threefold violence against the triple root of sin, namely:*

*Against pride, humility; against avarice, poverty; against the concupiscence of the flesh, chastity.*

#### *3. The final grace is necessary:*

*He who does not persevere in good works, but who falls by the wayside, is not worthy of the kingdom and will not enter into it. This grace is made up of three things:*

*(a) patient suffering of tribulations; no one can rule with Christ who has not been approved by him, and no one is approved who has not been proved;*

*(b) unlimited confidence;*

*(c) perseverance to live and die with Christ is to live and reign with him, embrace the cross and the practice of the Gospel.*

#### *4. Sapiential grace makes it easier for us to enter the kingdom:*

*Here he speaks of the sapiential graces which are not necessary of themselves but very useful. These are the highest -graces of the mystical state.*



## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

I. PIUS XI. *QUAS PRIMAS*

(Sonic extracts from the Encyclical instituting this Feast and promulgating it to the world.)

1. If we ponder this matter more deeply, we cannot but see that the title and the power of king belongs to Christ as man in the strict sense also. For it is only as man that he may be said to have received from the Father power and glory and a kingdom, since the Word of God as consubstantial with the Father has all things in common with him, and therefore has necessarily supreme and absolute dominion over all things created.

2. (After quoting the passages from the Old Testament which we have already cited, the Pope passes on the New Testament, and gives a summary of the argument there.)

Christ himself speaks of his kingly authority; in his last discourse, speaking of the rewards and punishments that will be the eternal lot of the just and the damned; in his reply to the Roman magistrate, who asked him publicly whether he was a king or not; after his resurrection, when he gave to his Apostles the mission of teaching and baptizing all nations. On these several occasions he called himself king, he confirmed the title publicly, he solemnly proclaimed that all power was given him in heaven and on earth. These last words especially show the greatness of his power, the infinite extent of his kingdom. What wonder then that he whom St John calls the prince of the kings of the earth, appears in the Apostle's vision of the future as: he who hath on his thigh and on his garment written King of kings and Lord of lords. It is Christ whom the Father hath appointed heir of all things, for he must reign until, at the end of the world, he hath put all his enemies under the feet of God the Father. . . .

The foundation of this power and dignity of our Lord is rightly indicated by Cyril of Alexandria. Christ, he says, has dominion over all creatures, a dominion not seized by violence nor usurped, but by his essence and by nature. His kingship is founded upon the ineffable hypostatic union. From this it follows that Christ is not only to be adored by men and angels, but that to him men and angels are subject and must recognize his empire. But a thought that must give us even greater joy and consolation is this, that Christ is our King by acquired, as well as by natural right, for he is our Redeemer. Would that those who forget what they have cost their Saviour might recall the words: You were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, of a lamb unspotted and undefiled. We are no longer our own, for Christ has purchased us with a great price; our very bodies are the member of Christ.

### 3. *Nature and meaning of the title:*

Let us explain briefly the nature and meaning of this lordship of Christ. It consists, we need scarcely say, in a threefold power which is essential to lordship. . . . It is a dogma of faith that Jesus Christ was given to man, not only as our Redeemer, but also as a lawgiver to whom obedience is due. . . . He claimed judicial power as received from his Father, when the Jews accused him of breaking the Sabbath by the miraculous cure of a sick man. For neither doth the Father judge any man; but hath given all judgement to the Son. In this power is included the right of rewarding and punishing all men living, for this right is inseparable from that of judging. Executive power, too, belongs to Christ, for all must obey his commands; none may escape them, nor the sanctions he has imposed.

### 4. *Primarily a spiritual kingdom:*

This kingdom is primarily spiritual and concerned with spiritual things . . . it is opposed to none other than the kingdom of Satan and to the power of darkness. It demands of its subjects a spirit of detachment from riches and earthly things, and a spirit of gentleness. They must hunger and thirst after justice, and more than this, they must deny themselves and carry the cross. . . .

It would be a grave error on the other hand to say that Christ has no authority whatever in civil affairs, since, by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to him by the Father, all things are in his power. . . .

### 5. *Embracing all men:*

Thus the empire of our Redeemer embraces all men. To use the words of Our immortal predecessor, Pope Leo XIII. His empire includes not only Catholic nations, not only baptized persons who, though of right belonging to the Church, have been led astray by error, or have been cut off from her by schism, but also all those who are outside the Christian faith; so that truly the whole of mankind is subject to the power of Jesus Christ. Nor is there any difference in this matter between the individual and the family or the State; for all men, whether individually or collectively, are under the dominion of Christ. . . .

### 6. *The King of Peace:*

When once all men recognize, both in private and in public life, that Christ is King, society will at last receive the great blessings of real liberty, well-ordered discipline, peace and harmony. Our Lord's regal office invests the human authority of princes and rulers with a rC **T**S s!sniftcanc^enables the citizen's duty of obedience. . . . e kingdom of Christ, then, receives, as it should, all nations opeinLth sv,a^' eJe?C?ms no reas°n why we should despair of seemg that peace which the King of Peace came to bring on <Lrth-

he who came to reconcile all things, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, who, though Lord of all, gave himself to us as a model *of* humility, and with his principal law united the precept of charity; who said also: My yoke is sweet and my burden light....

The faithful, by meditating upon these truths, will gain much strength and courage, enabling them to form their lives after the true Christian ideal. If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men purchased by his precious blood are by a new right subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire. He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and from belief to revealed truths and to the doctrine of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our bodies and our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or, to use the words of the Apostle Paul, as instruments of justice unto God.

## II. BOSSUET

### Kingdom of mercy and of love

(We shall give a summary of this, the second of three sermons of Bossuet on this subject. In the first he proves that Christ is King by the Redemption—a theme we have already mentioned; in the third he proves that he is King over earthly kings, to whom he has given the power to govern.)

#### 1. *Power, justice and mercy:*

Regal dignity is a prerogative of the divinity and is based on three main attributes: power, justice and mercy.

That God rules through his omnipotence is obvious; but the rule of his power is something general and common to all creatures, therefore it would appear convenient that there should be another type of rule over intelligent creatures. That is why we see that there shines over them the rule of goodness and justice. Of both, because both men and angels have divided themselves into two classes, those who have served God and those in rebellion against him; for which reason God also has been forced to divide his kingdom into one of a rule of iron and the other a rule of sweetness and mercy.

Given these truths, we may ask the divine Child what type of kingdom he intends to set up; it will not be that of power, since he is dressed in the humble garments of our humility and weakness; nor that of justice, since he himself confesses that he has not come to judge the world. What is left?—that of mercy.



2. *Kingdom of mercy:*

(a) Kings, benefactors of their people:

To realize the magnificent sovereignty of Christ we must first have a true idea of royalty, which does not consist in thrones, courts and garments, but in something very different. I lift up my eyes to God and see descend from that infinite majesty a ray of glory on those who have power on earth. It is none other than the power to do good to their people. King means common father. Royalty is the power for doing good, as is all power which is true.

(b) Christ, King and Saviour:

Let us admit then that Christ, our King, is looking for the good of his subjects. And what greater good than salvation? For that reason, on coming into the world and on seeing that the prophets announced his universal kingdom, Christ did not ask his Father for legions of angels, but was content to offer his life for the salvation of his people. But how do we know that this was the thought of Christ? Look at the Scriptures. He would not permit royal honour to be paid to him until Palm Sunday; nor did he confess his royal dignity until, at the beginning of his passion, before Pilate, he made a solemn declaration of it. He who had felt the applause of the crowds and the royal dignity they offered him, he who only revealed himself in figure and parables, confesses openly his royal dignity before a corrupt judge. I understand now, Lord; you proclaim yourself a king because now is the moment when you are going to save us.

3. *King of love:*

The conquest of my love:

The victory of kings is usually accomplished to the tune of lamentation on the part of the people; Christ is the only king who saves us by death. To understand this better let us lay down certain principles.

i. *What Christ really proposed on coming into this world was to conquer our hearts.* The hearts of all men. The stupid conflict of man against God had taken place on this battlefield of the heart and it was there that Christ would be victorious.

ii. *To overcome his enemies in this field Christ had to fill their hearts with love.* If you do not feel love for Christ in your heart you will never be conquered by him. To do this he died; and here we are at the very heart of his secret. This is why he had so few friends during his life, and those cowardly ones; but once he had shed his blood, then the people flock to him, and even Rome, the one who had tamed the whole world, bowed her head and honoured the tomb of a fisherman who had never bowed his head to Romulus.

iii. *He hail to pay a dear price for our redemption.* But the riches of this world were as nothing to him; therefore it had to be with the price of his precious blood, an infinite ransom.

iv. *Therefore we must give ourselves to him*—it is the least we can do. Christ purchased us, and purchase is an act by which one thing is given in exchange for another which is considered to have the same value. The only conclusion we can come to is that we are no longer ourselves, since such a great price has been paid for us; we belong to Christ who has purchased us. We must hand ourselves over to him completely, without breaking a contract which is so advantageous for us.

If we belong to him from birth, how can we hand ourselves over once again? By our love, which is what he is seeking all the time and what he desires. This is done by the acceptance of suffering and by the living of a Christian life in general.

### m. DOM COLUMBA MARMION

#### Christ, King of creation

(A summary of chap. 20 of *Christ in his Mysteries*—simple, yet full of doctrine.)

He begins with a summary of the royal dignity of Christ in the Scriptures, quoting the passages we have already mentioned in Section I. Then he gives the titles by which Christ is King of creation.

##### 1. *By his essence, through the hypostatic union:*

This union, by making Christ a God made man, also makes him the natural King of all men, since his nature is above all.

##### 2. *By right of inheritance:*

He is the natural Son of God, who is the heir to all things (Heb. 1. 2; Col. 1.13).

##### 3. *By right of conquest or redemption:*

All men, whether baptized or not, are a people redeemed by him, and that of itself is a title of rule over them all.

##### 4. *A universal kingdom:*

Christ is the Lord and Master of all (Acts 2. 36; Heb. 1. 3). Therefore there is nothing that can escape from the rule of his power, just as there is none who can escape from his redemption and from his divinity.

Therefore he is the universal owner:

(a) of material things, of which he can dispose as he pleases;

(b) of intellectual creatures, angels and men, obliged to obey him, both as individuals and as members of a society; therefore he is King over them.

i. *A/Mg over the families mho tire under lus /am* as having been constituted as such by a sacrament;

ii. *of the civil society*; since men do not make themselves independent of him just because they organize themselves into a human association. They merely increase the ties which bind them to him.

The spiritual nature of his kingdom means that men have to seek, above all else, the sanctification of their souls and that they must accommodate to that their business and temporal government.

(c) the obligations of his subjects:

i. *individuals* must submit themselves to Christ, body and soul; their intellect, by faith; their will, by obedience; their bodies, by using them in his service.

ii. *the family*: by following the directives of Christ in the conception and education of the children.

iii. *States*: admitting his Empire and dominion; accommodating themselves to his law.

The great sin of our times is that of the lay state—which repeats the cry of the Jews: We will not have this man to rule over us; we have no king but Caesar. Thus they renounce the fruits of peace and prosperity, which can only come to those who admit the reign of Christ.

## SECTION VI. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### A: The feast of Christ the King

##### The feasts of the Church for the benefit of the faithful

The feasts of the Church are destined, above all else, to give honour and glory to the three Persons of the Trinity; but they have also another purpose, for the benefit of the faithful. Pius XI mentions this in his Encyclical *Quas Primas*. He says:

(a) History, in fact, tells us that in the course of ages these festivals have been instituted one after another according to the needs or demands of the people of Christ; as when they needed strength to face a common danger, when they were attacked by heresies, when they needed to be urged to the pious consideration of some mystery of faith or some divine blessing. Thus in the early days of the Christian era, when the people of Christ were suffering cruel persecution, the cult of the martyrs was begun ... the liturgical honours paid to confessors, virgins and holy women produced wonderful fruit in an increased zest for virtue, necessary even in



times of peace. But more fruitful still were the feasts instituted in honour of the Virgin Mary....

(b) The festivals which have been introduced into the liturgy in more recent years have had a similar origin, and have been attended with similar results. When reverence and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament had grown cold, the feast of Corpus Christi was instituted. ... So, too, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was instituted at a time when men were oppressed by the gloomy pessimism of the Jansenists, which had made their hearts grow cold and had shut them out from the love of God and the hope of salvation.

### The fruit of the feasts

It is sufficiently clear that all the feasts of the Church produce their fruit in the faithful. What are these fruits? Two main ones.

#### 1. *In the doctrinal order:*

Taking occasion from the feast the liturgy presents the dogma—*lex orandi, lex credendi*.

(a) The liturgy is one of the most efficacious means of presenting the doctrines of the Church.

(b) It has the advantage, as Pius XI says, of touching the heart as well as the mind.

#### 2. *In the spiritual order:*

The feasts of the Church impress man and move him more than mere words.

(a) Things which he can see and hear move him more than invisible things because of his natural condition as man.

(b) The feasts give man an opportunity of asking God for the particular graces which are outlined in each of them; that is the purpose of the liturgical prayers. The prayer of the Church is behind the liturgy, which gives it a special efficacy; it is also a means of teaching the faithful; for example, at Christmas, the benefits of humility, poverty and love; in Lent the spirit of penance and mortification; at Easter the interior renovation of the spirit through grace, etc.

### The feast of Christ the King

I. The idea of the royal dignity of Christ is one which is found frequently in the course of the liturgical cycle.

(a) It was surely right, then, that the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth, destined to be spread among all men and all nations, should with every token of veneration salute her Author and Founder in her annual liturgy as King and Lord, and King of kings. And in fact she used these titles, giving expression with wonderful variety of language to one and the same concept, both in ancient psalmody and in the Sacramentaries.

(b) The perfect harmony of the Easter liturgies with our own in this constant praise of Christ the King shows once more the truth of the axiom, *Legum credendi lex statuit supplicandi (Quas Primas)*.

2. The feast of Christ the King has its special purpose and fruits; thus the Pope told the Bishops that they must be the ones who would explain the meaning of this feast to their people, in a way fitted to their intelligence, so that each year its fruitfulness might grow.

(a) The main fruit is of a social order; that nations should recognize the kingly dignity of Christ, together with peace and order among nations.

(b) It has other fruits of a doctrinal and spiritual order, which pertain to the individuals:

i. *doctrinal*: to make wider known and loved the regal dignity of Christ;

ii. *spiritual*: greater faith, love in the will, obedience to our king.

## B: Two phases of the kingdom

### A contrast in the liturgy

1. *Why on such a solemn and wonderful feast do we read a part of the Passion?*

(a) The reply is not difficult; in the first place, this passage contains the clearest possible affirmation of the regal dignity of Christ;

(b) the scene in general is one of humiliation, failure and sorrow.

2. *In contrast, the liturgy gives us quite another picture:*

(a) It is the triumph of Christ the King as presented to us in the Apocalypse, and to which the Introit refers (Apoc. 5. 12);

(b) to it also we may apply the words of Daniel quoted in the Alleluia.

## The phases of the kingdom of Christ

It has two, one in heaven and the other on earth. The liturgy, in order to be complete, must take both into consideration. In heaven it is a kingdom of glory and majesty; on earth it is interior, humble and hidden. The power of Christ extends to all things, but this power will be made manifest at the end of time; he does not wish to make use of it now. He is the King over individuals, nations, men and angels, but he awaits his day to impose that kingdom. These are the two phases of the kingdom to which the liturgy refers.

### I. *The earthly phase:*

We can see its characteristics in the Gospel.

(a) Apart from the world:

My kingdom is not of this world. It does not consist in riches, ostentation, power; but in poverty and humility.

(b) Humiliation and failure:

i. Christ did not proclaim himself king at the time of the adoration of the Magi; nor when the people wished to acclaim him as their king, not even on Palm Sunday.

ii. Instead he waits for his passion, and then, in the courtyard of Pilate, he proclaims it openly. Are you a king, Lord ? Where then is thy territory ; you have no land except that on which your feet rest. Where are your subjects, when even your friends have abandoned you and the crowd shouts that it has no king but Caesar? They do not want you to reign over them. Where are your soldiers, to defend you ? How is it that you can say you are a king ? My Kingdom is not of this world.

(c) Obedience, charity, the cross:

Hail, King of the Jews. Those soldiers did not know what they were doing. We can measure the extent of the truth of those same, words, and use them; Hail, King of humility, charity, obedience, a King whose throne is the cross.

2. *The glorious phase:*

(a) There are no insults, failures or ignominy in this phase:

- i. all the enemies of the King are made his footstool;
- ii. he is seated at the right hand of the Father;
- iii. his throne is the heavens; his sceptre that of justice.

(b) St John, in the Apocalypse, has described this stage of the kingdom for us (Apoc. 7. 10-11).

3. *The relation between the two stages:*

(a) The kingdom of Christ is within us:

In both phases Christ, apart from his triumph over his enemies and kingship over the nations of the earth, must also reign in the hearts of men.

i. *He will not reign in the next life unless he reigns first of all in this.* He who rejects Christ here below cannot reign with him in the kingdom of heaven. Those who refuse to fight under his banner here below cannot march in triumph before him in heaven.

ii. *His standard is obedience, humility, charity.* The more we make an effort to acquire and practise these virtues, the more Christ reigns in us.

iii. *His standard is the cross;* if you learn to embrace it, he reigns in you.



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(b) The world cannot understand this kingdom of Christ, nor can those who live by the world's standards:

For that reason, if Christ reigns in you, then you will suffer persecution of some kind, because you are not of the world; if the world reigns in you then it will applaud you and appreciate you, because you belong to it.

## II. THE EPISTLE

### A: The titles of Christ the King

#### i. *The Lamb who is King:*

(a) St John, in the vision of the Apocalypse, contemplated the throne of God surrounded by the angels singing the *Sancitis* and the ancients in adoration before it, saying: Thou, our Lord God, claimest as thy due glory and honour and power; by thee all things were created; nothing ever was, nothing was ever created, but in obedience to thy will (4.11).

(b) A little later the book appeared which no one could open. John weeps, but the Lamb who was slain appears, and the heavens cry out: Power and Godhead, wisdom and strength, honour and glory and blessing are his by right, the Lamb that was slain (5. 12). And the whole of creation joins in this praise; blessing and honour and glory and power, through endless ages, to him who sits on the throne and the Lamb.

(c) The Lamb is Christ. The scene represents his imperial proclamation with the same rights and in the same words as the power of the Father is proclaimed.

(d) Let us examine these titles on which the kingdom of Christ rests. The Lamb merits the title of King.

#### 2. *Because he is God:*

(a) The first foundation of his kingdom is the hypostatic union, which joins the two natures of man and God in such a strict union that the man Christ Jesus has all the powers and privileges of the godhead.

(b) Christ is the image of the invisible God, an image which is so perfect that it reproduces him exactly.

(c) Hence the first title to kingship. Christ is the king of all creation because he is its Lord, because it is the work of his hands; through him, by him and in him all things subsist.

#### 3. *Because he is the Son of God:*

Here is a new title. Only Christ is the Son of God, and only he has been able to receive the inheritance and co-possession of the world with the Father.

#### 4. *Because he is the Man-God:*

The title of King is reserved in this sense to Christ.

(a) If it is applied to the Father it is only allegorically, to indicate his supreme dominion.

(b) On the other hand the title is never used of the Holy Spirit nor, in the full juridical sense, of God who is not incarnate.

(c) Truly, to be king of men one must be a man, just as to be the head of the body of men.

i. A true king must be of the same nature as his subjects;

ii. God is the Lord; God made man is King of men;

iii. for that reason, in the womb of Mary was verified that anointing by which Christ became King. At that moment Christ attained the juridical status necessary for him to assume the title of King of men. On giving his divinity to that human body, he gave it the privileges which constitute the whole Christ King and Head of the human race;

iv. what is more, in him was the fullness of grace and of that grace we have all received. We live a supernatural life in so far as we are united with him, our Head.

#### 5. *Because he is the Redeemer:*

Legitimate right of conquest and purchase are sufficient titles to dominion over a nation.

(a) When this conquest consists in the freedom from a powerful enemy and from death, then the title is stronger still and based on love.

(b) Christ has purchased us at the price of his blood (Apoc. 5. 9; 7. 14; i Pet. 2. 9; Col. i. 14).

(c) Satan cried Victory, in Paradise; but who is like to Christ and who can stand against him? His was the final victory and our redemption.

#### 6. *King by acclamation:*

We have seen it already in those scenes of the Apocalypse; now the only thing that remains is for us to acclaim him in our homes and in our hearts, giving him loving and faithful service.

### B: Threefold power of Christ the king

#### The authentic royal dignity of Christ

The title of King is not a mere honorary one in the case of Christ, nor is it given to him in a metaphorical sense. He is really a king in his supreme power.

#### The supreme power

I. This supreme power includes three others, *viz.* legislative power, to indicate to his subjects the end and the means to attain it; judicial power, to decide who has obeyed and who has not obeyed these laws and take action accordingly; this latter is the executive power of putting into effect the sentences dictated.

2. Our modern civilization usually divides these powers up in various sections of the community, but in Christ they are all united.
3. It is a grave error to pretend to belong to the kingdom of Christ by mere externals or through devotions without good works.

#### In the spiritual order

##### 1. *Christ has the legislative power and uses it:*

(a) Immediately—in the doctrines he himself taught and the whole of the New Law;

(b) mediately, through his Church and the magisterium—He that heareth you heareth me (Luke 10. 16).

##### 2. *He has the judicial power—he said so himself:*

All judgement has been given into the hands of the Son (John 5.22).

(a) Immediately:

- i. in the particular judgement;
- ii. in the general judgement;
- iii. judging at every moment our actions and increasing our merits accordingly.

(b) Mediately:

Through the authorities of his Church, whose sanctions he ratifies. Whatsoever they bind on earth, he binds in heaven, what they loose, he looses too (Matt. 16. 19; John 20. 23).

##### 3. *He has the executive power:*

(a) in this life through the means of grace and providence;

(b) in the next, through the ministry of the angels to whom he will commend the sentence of damnation on the wicked and the glory of the just.

#### In the temporal order

1. Christ has not chosen to make use of his power to intervene in temporal matters.
2. But he has laid down the moral laws to which all rulers must submit and for which they will have to give him a most strict account.

### m. THE GOSPEL

A: My kingdom is not of this world

##### 1. *It is not that Christ should not rule in this world:*

What it means is that the characteristics of his kingdom are entirely opposed to those of the kingdoms of the earth. We have only to compare Christ with the Roman procurator to see this.



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### 2. *The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of truth:*

#### (a) Earthly kingdoms:

i. *They are conquered and sustained by force of arms*; they are given by men, have territorial ambitions, wish to remain for ever, attempt to give material prosperity;

ii. *but it is all a lie*; arms fall from the hands of their soldiers or are turned against their leader; the greatest of great empires fall and little by little find themselves reduced to a small island, Saint Helena. Temporal happiness can be attained but by itself is worth nothing.

#### (b) The kingdom of Christ:

Without any other weapons except the word of God, it is extended over the whole earth and until the end of time.

- i. It assures us of eternal happiness;
- ii. because it is the kingdom of truth.

### 3. *The kingdom of Christ is one of life:*

(a) Earthly kingdoms are too often built up on the bodies of millions of dead;

#### (b) that of Christ

i. *is a kingdom of life*—I have come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly (John 10. 10);

ii. *because it is the kingdom of truth*: Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17. 3);

iii. *to know that life and live it is to gain life for eternity*: one with Christ in his resurrection.

### 4. *It is a kingdom of sanctity and grace:*

(a) The kingdoms of the world will never understand this; they do not know the Father nor Christ (John 16. 3); therefore we live amidst two kingdoms at war, one which does not understand sanctity and one which aims at it.

(b) But the kingdom of Christ, just as it is one of truth, is also one of sanctity, holiness which consists in separating oneself from vice, sin—everything that could cause death, and drinking from that fountain which springs up to eternal life.

### 5. *The kingdom of Christ is one of justice, love and peace:*

#### (a) The world did not know the truth which was God:

It could not know true justice, which rests on him as its foundation and ultimate sanction.

- i. States, with no law above them, sought only their own advantage;
- ii. individuals admitted only fear of an external sanction, easy to evade;

iii. unmindful of God, they forgot brotherly love; the kingdom of the world is one of hatred;

iv. the logical result is war, whether private—through avarice, hatred of one individual for another etc.—or public, of classes and States.

(b) Christ:

Wishes for no war except an interior one against our passions and evil inclinations; he is the Prince of peace, who established that between man and God; he preached it between brother and brother; gives motives for it of the highest order. The distinctive mark of his followers is this peace.

6. On the one hand the Jews, kingdom of hatred and death; on the other, Christ, king of love, justice and peace.

(a) Pilate asks, Is this your King?

(b) Shall we reply with the Jews, Never; or will our answer be, Thy kingdom come?

## B: Kingdom of truth

### A mystery

A great mystery lies behind the choice of this text for the gospel of this feast.

1. The Church could have chosen the text of the Magi: Where is he that is born king of the Jews?

2. Or the occasion of the first multiplication of the loaves, when the people wished to make him king.

3. Or the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when he was proclaimed Son of David.

4. Or that of the final reward of the blessed: Take possession of the kingdom prepared for you.

5. Or the text of the Apocalypse: King of kings and Lord of lords (Apoc. 19.16).

Instead she chose this text, in which Christ does not appear as a king, in the splendour of his glory<sup>7</sup> and power, but as a guilty man before his judge, humiliated, a failure—he appears before the representative of the greatest power of that age, Rome.

### The occasion he chose to proclaim himself King

#### 1. *The Church has chosen this text:*

(a) because Christ actually says in it that he is King;

(b) adds that for that was he born and come into the world;

(c) and he defines the nature of his kingdom—the kingdom of truth.

2. *The end of government is to unify:*

We must keep this in mind if we want to understand the exact meaning of the phrase used by Christ.

(a) Every government needs a unifying principle; that is why it establishes an order.

(b) Just as providence is an order, so prudence, the virtue proper to rulers, tries to establish an order among people in the society; this order may be of different grades, one more perfect than another; thus :

i. *there is public order*, preventing strife among the citizens and attempt to coerce them by violence;

ii. *juridical order*—the courts, laws, etc.;

iii. *good citizenship*—when the citizens fulfil their obligations voluntarily;

iv. *patriotism, etc.* ; sentiments of tradition, love for their country, etc.

(c) Each of these orders penetrates deeper than the former into the hearts and minds of the citizens; each is a stage higher.

### The most perfect of all kings

Not one of these orders is comparable to that established by Christ in his kingdom. That kingdom is far superior to any other.

(a) It despises armed force (Matt. 26. 52);

(b) it does not share out material blessings, which is why Christ fled when the people tried to take him by force and proclaim him king (John 6. 15);

(c) it does not rest on human traditions; rather Christ came to break the Jewish tradition, which tended to separate the world into two groups, Jew and non-Jew (Eph. 2. 14-16).

### Union in truth

1. *The kingdom of Christ is one of truth:*

What I was born for, what I came into the world for, is to bear witness of the truth (John 18. 37).

(a) He was full of grace and truth (John 1. 14).

(b) Moses was a great law giver; but he governed by the law; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1. 17).

2. *To what truth does Christ refer?*

To the only truth; truth supreme, essential. At times in the Scriptures the word is opposed to false doctrine; at others to what is figurative, at others it is used of participated truth.

(a) The truth by which this King governs is not false, it is authentic ; it is not figurative, but real; it is not participated, but his *very* essence. He is truth itself.

(b) He is the truth—and the whole truth; I am the way, the truth and the life.



### Human kings govern by means of laws

This is an ordinance of reason towards the common good.

1. *The prudence of the subject lies in recognizing this fact and acting on it:*

(a) it is an effect of the virtue of obedience;

(b) but the subject is not united directly to the mind of the ruler.

2. *It is not thus in the kingdom of Christ:*

(a) The subjects of that kingdom are united directly to the one who governs them; not just by their reason, but directly, united to truth itself. Intellect learns from the truth, but it is also caught up by that truth itself—that is the object and meaning of those words in St John's gospel: That they may all be one, that they too may be one in us, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ... (17. 21).

(b) This spiritual and mystical union which exists in the Son is born of the joining of wills and sentiments of love through the knowledge of the truth in which is eternal life (John 17. 3).

### C: A kingdom of life

1. *The words of the preface:*

A kingdom of truth and life, *regnum veritatis et vitae*. Because it is a kingdom of truth it is also one of life.

2. *The meanings of the word 'life':*

(a) The word has three meanings:

i. The first and most direct meaning is that of a living thing—something which, in the idea of the ordinary man in the street, moves, and is therefore alive.

ii. It is understood in the sense of a vital operation, whether this be nutrition, assimilation, consciousness, generation, etc.

iii. Lastly, as the directive principle of these vital operations.

(b) The kingdom of life should be taken in this context, to mean eternal life, begun here below and brought to its perfection in eternal life in heaven—the life of grace in other words.

i. Life is one continued action by which man is united to God (St Thomas, 1-2, q. 3. a. 2. *ad ^um*);

ii. therefore the kingdom of Christ—the kingdom of life—will be in heaven, where all the blessed will perform perfectly that vital operation of life which is the union between themselves and Christ. But this life begins here below, through grace.

3. *A kingdom of liberty:*

Because it is a kingdom of truth it is also one of liberty.

(a) As Pope Leo XIII says:

Just as the power to err and the actual error itself is a vice which demonstrates an imperfect intellect; so the embracing of a truth

which is false and deceptive, even though it may be a sign of freedom, as illness is of life, nevertheless, it is a defect of liberty. This fits in perfectly with St Thomas's doctrine, that freedom to sin is not a part of liberty.

(b) The reign of truth is true liberty because now sin is impossible:

Then will be verified the words of Augustine: Then we shall enjoy true liberty, when our will is the slave of truth.

(c) In this life our free will allows us to sin:

Thus we become the slaves of sin.

(d) In the kingdom of true liberty, truth will be the only standard:

St Teresa says: O Free-will, thou art the slave of thy freedom, unless thou be pierced through with fear and love for him who created thee! Oh, then will come that happy day in which thou shalt find thyself engulfed in that infinite ocean of supreme truth, wherein thou shalt not be free to sin, nor wish to be so, since thou shalt be secure from all misery, and made of one nature with the life of thy God {*Exclamations*, xvii. 4).

#### 4. *Liberty and authority:*

In the kingdom of Christ, where all human differences will be settled amicably:

(a) there will be both perfect liberty and perfect authority;

(b) liberty will consist in perfect submission to the truth, in which the kingdom consists;

(c) our soul will be free just because it is in perfect submission to the truth.

#### 5. *The fulness of life:*

(a) a kingdom of life and its fulness;

(b) the intellect, known and knowing as it is known, will be perfect;

(c) the will, with perfect freedom, will be entirely subjected to the intellect;

(d) and because its intellectual light is at the same time full of love, the will must be burning with that love, known to the intellect.

### D: Kingdom of holiness and grace

I. Christ is the only king who can use a double system of ruling, interior and exterior.

(a) The exterior may have some resemblance to the rule of human powers:

i. he governs by his example, by his precepts and counsels:

ii. the Gospel is for all the rule of life;

iii. he established his Church, Teacher of truth, to preserve the truth of his doctrine for all time, to interpret it and to make laws to govern men. Any other system would have resulted in chaos and the loss of the truth.

(b) But he is also a ruler interiorly, by his grace and the vital influence he has on souls.

(c) In this sense he is the head of a mystical body, and thus establishes the kingdom of grace to which the preface makes reference.

## 2. *Interior influence:*

(a) He communicates to us supernatural life. He is the only source and origin of this life in souls.

(b) In the New Testament this truth is taught in various analogies; the four best known being that of the stone, the vine, the light and the head:

i. he is the living stone on which the whole building is constructed (1 Cor. 10. 4);

ii. he is the vine, of which we are the branches (John 15. 1-7);

iii. he is the light which enlightens every<sup>7</sup> man that comes into this world (John 1. 9; 3. 19; 8. 12; 9. 5);

iv. he is the head of a vast body, we are his members (1 Cor. 12. 3; Col. 1. 18; 2. 10; Eph. 1. 22; 4. 15; 5. 23).

## 3. *The two empires:*

It is useful to remember that Christ is not the head of his Church as the devil is the head of his empire of evil. There is a substantial difference between them.

(a) The kingdom of Christ differs substantially from that of the devil:

i. because there is a very<sup>7</sup> different relation which unites head and members;

ii. the devil never goes beyond external influence, which may get as far as the imagination or the interior senses, but which can never reach the higher powers or the essence of the soul.

(b) In Christ something very different takes place:

i. he also has an external influence, but more perfect than that of the devil; but he has also an interior influence, reaching to the very sources of our natural life and lifting it up to a supernatural level;

ii. he can act on the spiritual powers of the soul by means of the gifts of the Holy Spirit;

iii. on the very essence of the soul by grace.

## 4. *The grace of Christ, the head of his Body:*

(a) Grace is a sharing in the divine nature:

(b) The fulness of grace can be given in two ways;



i. either because a soul has all the grace it can have in every line—and this is proper to Christ alone;

ii. or because someone has the fulness of grace according to his condition or office, up to the limit laid down by divine providence for this individual.

(c) Of the fulness of the grace of Christ we all share—he is the origin of all grace.

(d) As it is thus shared it is called the grace of the Head, which gives life to the whole body.

5. *Grace and holiness:*

(a) The kingdom of Christ is called the kingdom of grace and holiness;

(b) holiness means purity;

(c) not in the usual sense, but in the sense of purification of our self-love so that we may live in union with Christ;

(d) we must kill our natural, evil inclinations, to hide ourselves in Christ (Col. 3. 3);

(e) the first thing that happens is that the new life takes possession of our soul and then has its effect on the inferior powers; these latter will be imperfect in this life and perfect in the next;

(f) this influence is an effect of the humanity of Christ (*Summa*, 3. q. 8. a. i. c).

6. *Perfect subjects:*

(a) We shall see this perfectly in the next life—not in this. Then our bodies too will be spiritual ones;

(b) the body will enjoy the fulness of life;

(c) it will then be a spiritual life, because everything that the body has of mortality will be swallowed up in life.

(d) He who raised Christ from the dead will then give life also to our mortal bodies by his Spirit -which dwells in us (Rom. 8. 11).

7. *Kingdom of holiness:*

Such is the power of the Head that the whole body will be transformed; we are citizens of heaven and we must not forget it (Phil. 3. 20-21).

## E: Kingdom of justice, love and peace

1. *Truth and justice:*

Because the kingdom of Christ is one of truth, it is also one of justice. This can be understood in three ways:

(a) the social aspect:

i. *social, civic justice should be based on the truth of things as they are.* It cannot be an arbitrary thing which depends on this or that government, or judge.

ii. *Human justice must be based on the law of God and on natural law, which is the same thing under another aspect.*

(b) Justice with our neighbour:

A special aspect of truth, by which we give to everyone what is his due.

(c) Justice towards God:

i. *Truth is a reflection of a model—and that model is God, the divine mind as the image of all things that are made.*

ii. *The more we fit in with the divine plan the more true we are—and the more just.*

iii. *Therefore the reign of Christ is not merely one of truth, but also one of justice.*

2. *Pauline formulas:*

(a) This last statement is based on St Paul, in whose writings we find many expressions of it.

(b) God has a plan for us, in which he has traced out the good works we should do through the merits of Christ, disposed by actual graces—it is the usual Pauline formula, working the truth in charity (Eph. 4. 15).

3. *A kingdom of love:*

(a) It is not enough, then, to do the works of justice, even if we take that word in its third meaning; there must also be love.

i. The supreme motive of the love of God first of all;

ii. how many times Jesus said in the course of his life that the whole law of the prophets was summed up in this one of love!

(b) At the end of your life—says John of the Cross—you will be examined about love. At the end of life, all social distinctions will vanish and there will be only one test; that of love—charity alone will remain of the three theological virtues.

4. *A kingdom of peace:*

Because it is the reign of charity it will also be the reign of peace. Peace understood in two ways;

(a) Peace with others, concord;

(b) interior peace; perfection of joy in peace.

5. *The ladies of the court:*

Here is Christ, surrounded by his court. At the right hand justice and peace; on the left, holiness and grace. He is followed by the two figures of justice and charity; and the last is that of peace.

F: King of kings

1. *Two meanings of the phrase:*

(a) Grammatical:

It means that Christ is King over all other kings, over all the rulers of the earth;

- i. that in him is the origin of all earthly power;
- ii. that subjects must obey their rulers as if they were giving obedience to God;
- iii. that all must be accommodated to the laws of God.

The authority of Christ over all the rulers of the earth does not lessen their own authority, on the contrary, it increases it.

(b) The mystical sense:

The phrase King of kings has another meaning. Christ wishes to make all his subjects kings. We shall reach that dignity when Christ rules completely in our hearts—when there is no other vital principle except that of Christ, both in our souls and bodies.

2. *The perfect kingdom:*

- (a) This is the one Christ will offer to the Father.
- (b) He will not offer it yet, because it has not yet reached the perfection it should reach through Christ's merits.
- (c) Christ is not yet the King of kings in this sense, and so he has not yet presented to the Father the perfect fruit of his reign (i Cor. G. 24).

3. *A Church without spot or stain:*

(a) Writing to the Ephesians St Paul says:

Christ showed love for the Church when he gave himself up on its behalf. He would hallow it, purify it by bathing it in the water to which his word gave life, he would summon it into his own presence, the Church in all its beauty, no stain, no wrinkle, no such disfigurement; it was to be holy, it was to be spotless (Eph. 5. 25-27).

(b) This spotless Church has not yet appeared:

- i. *There are still venial sins and imperfections*, even among the just.
- ii. *There is the stain of corruption yet*—only at the last day will that be removed.

4. *The definitive triumph:*

- (a) Christ will attain his final triumph when his last enemy, death, has been destroyed.
- (b) He must triumph, not only over sin, but also over death.
- (c) He wins the victory over sin when he infuses grace; but the victory over death will not come until the general resurrection.

5. *The final triumph:*

(a) St Paul, in his usual vivid fashion, expresses it in his epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 15.

(b) There we see how Christ will win the final victory over his enemies; the just will be re-born to life; even their bodies will be given new life in Christ, kingly bodies, true subjects of the King. This is the glorious kingdom which the Son will present to the Father.



## G: Christ conquers

1. *The rebellion against Christ:*

When those two old people took Christ in their arms at the presentation in the temple, they both had words of warning about sorrow, signs of contradiction. Now, today, we see in the courtyard of Pilate the sign of contradiction. He declares his kingship; the crowd declares that they have no king but Caesar. They will not have Christ to reign over them. It is the summary of the whole of history. Let us see how he answers this shout of defiance on the part of the people.

2. *The reason for their rebellion :*

(a) The people mutiny and nations make vain plans (Ps. 2.1):

It has been thus from the beginning, but possibly never until now has it reached the extent of total rebellion.

(b) See how the kings of the earth stand in array, how its rulers make common cause against the Lord, and against the King he has anointed . . .

i. With few exceptions States can be divided into two classes, those who are in open rebellion against Christ and those who call themselves Christian and are not. If the tree must be known by its fruits, if love has to express itself in words, what are to we say about those States which, while they profess Christ with their lips, admit divorce, lay schools, etc. Are they for him or against him?

ii. The difficulty is at times to see why they persecute this innocent victim, who could have changed the face of the earth, had they but heard his words.

3. *God's reply:*

He who dwells in heaven is laughing at their threats, the Lord makes light of them; and at last, in his displeasure, he will speak out; his anger quelling them (*ibid.* 4-5).

(a) Either with Christ or against him—there is no middle way.

(b) In his due time:

i. To those martyrs of the vision of the Apocalypse it was said that they should remain quiet for a time yet, until the number of their ranks was completed (6. 11);

ii. to God a thousand years is but a second ;

iii. Christianity lives on, but in our schools we can teach students the names of her worst persecutors; the popes are visited and near lie the tombs of their oppressors.

4. *Because Christ is the King to whom God has given all power :*

(a) He is the Son of God: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee (Ps. 2. 7);

(b) he is the heir: Ask thy will of me, and thou shalt have the nations for thy patrimony (*ibid.* 8);

(c) he is the Lord: To the very ends of the earth for thy domain (<<);

(d) he is the power of God: all other powers are like earthen vessels compared with him and his power.

#### 5. *Conclusion:*

Before the lessons of history:

(a) Princes, take warning; learn your lesson, you that rule the world. Tremble, and serve the Lord, rejoicing in his presence, but with awe in your hearts (*ibid.* 10-11);

(b) remember, both rulers and servants, that this King has two moments, one of patience and one of anger.

(c) Happy are those who find their refuge in him.

### H: Christ, king of the family

#### Christ, King

1. Before Pilate—he declares his kingship, which had been there from the very beginning.

2. Christ, as King of the family.

### A spiritual kingdom

The characteristics of this royal dignity: it is a spiritual kingdom he has come to preach, one which will fulfil on earth the two purposes, salvation and instruction.

#### 1. *Christy the Saviour:*

He comes to save us by the incorporation of fallen man into his mystical body; he is the Son, and he will make us sons; he is a King, and he will make us kings. He is the heir, and he will make us heirs also. He gives us a new interior life.

#### 2. *Christy the teacher:*

(a) Christ tells us, in this same passage, that he also exercises his regal dignity by preaching the truth, that he had come into the world for that purpose, to give testimony to the truth (John 18. 37).

(b) To join his kingdom is to incorporate oneself into the truth of his message: Whoever belongs to the truth, listens to my voice (*ibidi*).

(c) This life in Christ has an influence on all man's actions.

(d) Paul, in the epistle, tells us that we have received the light, we have been taken out of the darkness.

### Christ and the Family

#### 1. *He redeems it:*

(a) By the sacrament of matrimony, by which he raises up to a supernatural level the natural contract. This sacrament gives a new vitality to the whole of the family life, together with the actual graces necessary to live that life, with all its obligations.

(b) Because he redeemed not merely married people, but all men inside the Christian family;

i. any corruption within the family has its effects also outside-on all the citizens (Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili*)',

ii. if the family is sanctified, then little by little each of its members will learn to love religion and piety, hate false teachings, to be virtuous and to restrain that egoism which is at the heart of the ruin of civilization.

#### 2. *He teaches the family, by his life and words:*

##### (a) His example:

i. he lived for thirty years a family life (Luke 2. 51);

ii. in the family he worked, obeyed, grew in wisdom and grace;

iii. at the end of his life he hands over his mother to the care of his beloved disciple;

iv. he sanctifies marriage by his presence at Cana;

v. his first miracle is a gift to his mother;

vi. in Bethany he sanctifies friendship in the family circle;

vii. he shares and diminishes their sorrows.

##### (b) His teaching concerning the family:

i. conditions of marriage; indissoluble in its unity (Matt. 19. 39'

ii. it forms subjects for his kingdom, who must love him above all things and serve him faithfully;

iii. he continues this teaching through his infallible Church (Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*).

### Conclusion

Let us make his rule effective in our families.

(a) By hearing his word,

(b) by imitating his example,

(c) by bringing about the Christian formation of our family.

### I: How Christ reigns in our homes

#### The theological principles

I. The affirmation of Christ before Pilate that he is a King is a universal one, sufficient of itself to affirm the right of regal dignity



over all members of the human race, either as individuals, as family or as a State.

2. However, let us see if we can put these theological principles in a more concrete form.

3. There is a threefold society within the limits of the family, and Christ's royal sway extends over them all.

### The royal prerogatives of Christ in the conjugal society

His rights come from the fact that he raised it to the dignity of a sacrament.

i. *A sacrament causes as well as signifies grace:*

This rule of holiness and grace which Christ came to plant in all hearts is brought about by sanctifying grace, which lifts us up.

2. *It is a sign of the union with Christ and his Church:*

(a) What he has not given to the State he has given to Christian marriage, that it should be an image of the union between himself and his Church (Eph. 5. 25).

(b) Its beauty and dignity.

3. *It demands holiness to contract it:*

It is a sacrament of the living. So that the King may enter, the dwelling must be duly prepared.

4. *It demands holiness to live it:*

We must make use of the same sacrament and its graces, fulfilling the will of God, who has given a most high dignity to this contract.

(a) It is unworthy of this sacrament to commit any sins against it by a bad use of marriage; that would be a waste of our Father's inheritance.

(b) Therefore marriage—the family, which is its root—fall under the royal sway of Christ.

### The royalty of Christ in the parent-child relationship

This new society within marriage is born of the relation between parents and children.

1. The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of new subjects of his kingdom.

2. They must be baptized, *i.e.* brought into the kingdom; a child is born with this right. What beauty in this sacrament, by which new citizens are brought to the Church, from whom they receive the divine life of Christ, that they may live it!

3. *Their Christian education:*

(a) It is not enough that they should be born; they must also be fed, both in the natural and the supernatural orders.

(b) This demands a Christian education which will teach them to live the divine life which is in them, that Christ may grow in them. The family is the best educator.

(c) This obligation carries with it :

- i. that of teaching the children their faith;
- ii. strengthening their will to live holy lives and to love God;
- iii. giving them good example in the fulfilment of religious duties ;
- iv. family prayers, feasts celebrated as a family; the whole family spirit permeated with God and his grace.

### The royalty of Christ in the domestic society

This includes the family and their servants. All form one family; all are members of the Church and the kingdom of Christ, destined for the same eternal end. God in his providence has destined some to be servants and some to be masters, but all live together for their mutual sanctification and salvation.

1. The servants should do their duty faithfully, with competence and affection, seeing Christ in their masters (Eph. 6. 5-7).

2. Masters should do their duty by their servants, the duty of charity and justice, which is demanded by the personal dignity of the individual and the Christian status :

- (a) just wage for labour ;
- (b) without excessive demands in the way of work;
- (c) with time to fulfil their religious obligations;
- (d) teaching them the faith ;
- (e) giving them an example of a Christian life;
- (f) treating them with true paternal love and affection.

### Conclusion

Christ is by right the king over our families—may he grant us the joy of seeing that kingdom ever more extended.

### J: Christ the King

1. *A meditation based on the Exercises of St Ignatius:*

On this feast we may consider ourselves as soldiers, lined up before Christ, who comes to us and appeals to us. He waits for our reply.

2. *The King—Christ our Lord:*

- (a) so great in himself; the God made man:
  - i. *perfection of wisdom, holiness, power.* The universal King by nature and by right of conquest;

ii. *he comes in person*, even though the Chosen People will not open their doors to him.

(b) So generous :

He has given us everything; being, gifts of nature and grace, his teaching, his law of love, his life, his death, the Eucharist, the Church, our native land, our family...

(c) So human :

i. he has accommodated himself to our weakness in becoming man ;

ii. has become our shepherd, leaving the ninety-nine in the desert and searching for the one which was lost;

iii. became the father of the prodigal son, giving him the embrace of pardon, and also the father of the faithful son.

3. *His call to us:*

(a) Whom does he call ?

i. *All of us, and me personally* ; each one can say he loved me and gave himself for me (Gal. 2. 20).

ii. *A sublime honour and responsibility*—not one is forgotten, all are called.

(b) The task to which we are called:

To conquer the world for God, and to conquer ourselves.

i. *today on this feast, he asks me to take another step forward in the work of my sanctification* ; in the advance of my holiness there should be no pause, no sterile moments.

ii. *he calls us to the apostolate*, each one in his own way and degree. All have an obligation to advance this work, in their interior lives by their prayer, also by following the call of the hierarchy.

(c) Enemies:

i. we are either soldiers of Christ or we fight against him; we must know our enemies;

ii. they are the devil, world and flesh—together with ignorance, which can be a terrible enemy. Christ came to bring us the truth.

(d) Result of the task—sure victory:

Against him no power can stand (Rom. 8. 28-39).

4. *The conditions the King proposes:*

(a) Come with me—to go with Christ:

He does not send his soldiers to fight, he leads them.

(b) work with me—by his side:

In collaboration with him, as one of his members. Thus our work shares in his divine power.



## (c) follow me in suffering:

- i. If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16. 24);
- ii. we cannot have soft living members under a head which was crowned with thorns;
- iii. we must enter into the kingdom through the door of suffering.

## (d) follow him in glory:

- i. This will be given to us afterwards, as a glory and reward for our merits;
- ii. he wants us to be able to call this victory ours.

5. *The reply of those who are sensible:*

An obligation, to offer oneself to him without condition; Christ has an absolute right over me; he will now be my king by my own choice.

## K: The standard of the King

Christ, as a true King, has a standard, one which cannot be mistaken and which arises from the very constitution of the kingdom, from its fundamental teachings.

1. St Ignatius puts before us the meditation on the two standards to show us clearly how God acts in his kingdom and how the devil acts in his. Christ tells us that, when the devil is cast out from any place, it is a sign that the kingdom of God has reached that place (Matt. 12. 28).
2. We need to know today what is the standard of Christ, because the enemy goes to work among us, in our spiritual lives, and it is necessary to discover his tricks, so as to cast him far from us, so that the true kingdom may grow in our hearts.

## Three characteristics

i. *Poverty, against riches:*

## (a) The devil acts in a contrary fashion:

If you are the Son of God command that these stones be made bread.

## (b) Christ:

- i. tells us of the difficulties which riches put in the way of our entry into the kingdom, as if they choked the seed of the word of God, which is the root of his kingdom within us;
- ii. he demands a renunciation of self on the part of all who would be his disciples (Luke 14. 33);
- iii. he announces solemnly that the rich possessions of the kingdom are for the poor (Matt. 5.3);

iv. with the example of his life he has shown us that the way to the kingdom is through poverty.

2. *Persecution and insults against worldly honours:*

(a) The devil:

Offers his followers all the kingdoms of the earth, if they will serve him;

(b) Christ:

i. calls blessed those who suffer persecution; theirs is the kingdom;

ii. on the way to Emmaus declares that this is the only way to enter into the kingdom;

iii. the example of his own life—when there was a chance that he might be proclaimed king by force, he fled into the mountains.

3. *Humility against pride:*

(a) The devil:

Brings into our hearts the desire to be like gods. This trick had good results in the case of our first parents, and he never ceases to try it on. Even in the case of Christ himself he tried it (Matt. 4. 6).

(b) Christ:

i. the kingdom is for those who become as little children (Matt. 18. 4);

ii. the one who humbles himself shall be exalted;

iii. he came to minister, not to be ministered to;

iv. St Paul tells us that the glory of our King came only after a long series of humiliations (Phil. 2. 7-11).

## Conclusion

In today's gospel Christ appears humbled, dishonoured, poor; yet he proclaims his kingship, he reigns from the cross. But there the good thief recognized his kingship.

## L: The soldiers of the King

i. *The call of Christ:*

(a) He invited all, without forcing anyone:

i. his royal dignity is over all, but he will not force anyone to enlist in his service—such is his respect for our liberty while we are alive. The soldiers of Christ are those *ἀντὶς* wish to be so.

ii. he went about inviting followers, some he called personally.

(b) Many did not want to follow him:

i. because of riches, which would not allow them to decide in his favour, or for other reasons (Luke 9. 59-62);

- ii. others joined at first, but in the moment of danger they fled if they did not deny him;
- iii. one of them denied and betrayed him;
- iv. perhaps only Mary, his Mother, followed him without a moment's hesitation.

(c) Why?

Some had joined forces with him, but they did not wear his livery with courage. Others were frightened of it and did not want to accept it. Why?

- i. he was a poor king, *λνίτο* had not whereon to lay his head; and the young man had many possessions; Judas loved money, even in small quantities;
- ii. he was a king who, although he was God, took the form of a slave, rejected the kingly honours, and worked even his greatest miracles in secret. The apostles dreamed of temporal dominion.
- iii. the sensual men remained in the other camp—Herod, for example; but those who were attracted by riches and honours deserted from his service and were on the point of changing standards.
- iv. Mary remained faithful because she had understood the doctrine of Christ.

2. *The standard of the cross:*

- (a) It was necessary to bring this lesson down to a practical level and to preach it from the cross;
- (b) it was necessary to enlighten their minds with the blinding rays of Pentecost.
- (c) Then it was that disciples like Paul were not afraid to be considered mad; they lived on alms or the work of their hands, and, despising riches and honours, they reached the kingdom together with Christ.
- (d) Paul, that good soldier, advises Timothy: Then, like a good soldier of Christ, take thy share of hardship. Thou art God's soldier, and the soldier on service, if he would please the captain who enlisted him, will refuse to be entangled in the business of everyday life ... (2 Tim. 2. 3-4).

3. *If anyone will come after me . . .*

From that moment the standard of Christ was lifted up.

- (a) Some join in the first rank; those who leave all things to serve him.
- (b) To all, whether soldiers in the front line or those in reserve, it is said. If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16. 24).
  - i. How shall we refuse your command, Lord, when it is you who call us?



ii. Leave on one side those disordered ambitions, which occupy so much of our time; the desires for riches, honours, which dry up the heart and extinguish charity. Let us embrace that daily cross, and then we shall be worthy soldiers of the king who leads us into battle.

*Twenty-fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost*

## THE LAST COMING OF CHRIST

### SECTION I. SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Epistle: Colossians i. 9-14

Gospel: Matthew 24. 15-35.

Cf. Mark 13. 14-31; Luke 21. 8-33

(To avoid repetition we have not included here texts on the judgement, since they are listed under the First Sunday of Advent.)

### SECTION II. GENERAL COMMENTS

#### I: LITURGICAL

##### I. *The last Sunday:*

With this Sunday the liturgical cycle for the year is closed. It need not surprise us to find that it is of great importance in the liturgy of the Church. Just as we celebrate the civil feast of the last day of the year, so the Church keeps this last Sunday of her liturgical cycle. On the previous Sundays we have already noticed a kind of preparation for this day. The special significance of this Sunday comes from the Gospel of St Matthew, where we see portrayed for us the last coming of Christ in triumph at the end of time, to judge all mankind.

This idea has received two interpretations among Christians, both of them true. We have already seen, in one of the sermon schemes for the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, the two ways of looking at death on the part of the early Christians and those of the Middle Ages. In the interpretation of today's Gospel we notice the same phenomenon. The first Christians, with their profound faith, filled with the highest ideals of Pauline theology, think only of the triumph of Christ and our triumph with him (1 Thess. 4. 16-17). Longing for this coming, they would repeat the last words of the Apocalypse: Come, Lord Jesus. For them, this Gospel was one of hope and optimism.

The Middle Ages saw themselves weighed down by sin and were most conscious of their guilt before God. For that reason they trembled before this Gospel, seeing nothing more in it than that strict account which would have to be rendered on that day. The famous painting of Michelangelo of the Last Judgement and the no less famous sequence of Fray Thomas of Celano represent this spirit. For them, today's Gospel is one of fear and terror.

Apart from these two, there are other considerations. The liturgical year presents to us the various mysteries of our redemption, which reach their highest point in the last judgement, because the redemptive work of Christ will not attain its full triumph until that day comes. It is logical, therefore, that, on the last day of the liturgical year, this last act of the redemption should be commemorated.

*2. How shall we deal with this? Which aspect shall be presented?*

As we shall see, any and all of them; because they all have an historical and liturgical foundation. We shall deal with them all, so as to be able to select later. The preacher must see which one is most convenient for his purposes here and now.

(a) The judgement, motive for hope:

This aspect seems more appropriate to the gospel of St Luke, which is read on the first Sunday of Advent. There the description of Jerusalem is left out and at the end the words are full of hope, because we are told that, when this day comes, we should lift up our heads, because our redemption is at hand. However, this thought is not alien to today's gospel, especially if we take the Mass into consideration, with the words of hope in the Introit. God has thoughts of peace, not those of affliction. The triumph of Christ should be ours also. That is why, in the Gelasian Sacramentary, there is a Preface for today which speaks of this triumph and of the joy of the just.... On that day the just will rejoice, while the wicked will be put to shame; the good will be filled with graces, while the Jewish nation which rejected him will be condemned, in confusion.

This impression of peace and serenity is also reflected in the Mozarabic Missal: We bless thee, O Lord Jesus Christ... who will grant us eternal peace in the land of the living. While we await the day of our resurrection, do thou console us today, and do not allow us to perish in the evil of sin; on the day of our death, take us to thyself in the sweetness of thy love, that we may remain in thy praise and blessing for ever.

(b) The terror of the judgement:

Perhaps the consideration which is most proper to this Sunday. The gospel shows us the end of the world, mixed up with the destruction of Jerusalem; and we may well see in the latter a symbol of the former. Just as the ruin of this city was the result of the just punishments of God for the sins of infidelity which the Jews had committed, so the destruction of the world will be the punishment for the sins of the human race. As that of Jerusalem was terrible and frightening, so will that of the end of the world be.

This consideration gives birth to fear, which is a salutary thing in a Christian life. The liturgy is full of the spirit of mercy and goodness, confidence without limits in the pardon of God. The same is true of the gospels in general, where these sentiments predominate;



but there are also harsh expressions which refer to the punishment of the Jews. But tear must not be overlooked altogether, and so, once a year, the liturgy presents for our consideration the passage of the gospels which is most likely to excite that sentiment.

(c) The last act of the redemption:

The redemption of Christ may be thought of as having three acts:

- i. the life and passion of Christ, by which he won all graces for us;
- ii. the application of these by means of the sacraments;
- iii. the last judgement.

The first is over, the last has not yet come. We are now in the second act of the drama, on which the last will depend. The Church wishes to remind us of that last act, because it will be definitive and because the whole of our life depends on it. God pours out his graces upon us, and the good use we make of them will decide our judgement. We should give thanks to God today for all his benefits and ask ourselves if we are taking advantage of them as we should. It is a day of self-examination and gratitude.

(d) Preparation for Advent:

Cardinal Schuster, in his exposition of this Sunday, deals almost exclusively with this aspect, which is most useful for the preacher. Last year has seen an outpouring of the grace of God; in like manner will be the year to come. Perhaps we have not taken due advantage of those we have received; but we must make good use of those to come. The Collect seems to refer to this idea, because it asks for even greater remedies—*remedia majora*. God will certainly not deny them to us; but by means of our co-operation, we must make sure that they are greater.

We have seen, however briefly, how fertile is the liturgy of this Sunday, both in meaning and application. The preacher, no matter what his theme, must make an effort to convince his hearers that today is no ordinary Sunday. It signifies the end of a life, and the beginning of another, which will either be happy for ever or unhappy.

## H. EXEGETIC AND MORAL NOTES

### A: The Epistle: Colossians 1. 9-14

*Argument:*

In spite of the presence of those false doctors of whom we spoke last Sunday, Paul has motives for giving thanks to the God of battles for the Church of the Colossians. These sentiments fill the introduction of the Epistle; but he also begins at once to develop his main theme, which is the primacy and divinity of Christ. He tells them what a Christian life should be.

It must be founded on knowledge. We are rational beings, and our life must be built on rational principles, in the natural as well as in the supernatural order. But merely speculative knowledge will not help us for living; it must descend to practice, it must produce fruits worthy of holiness. It is at this point that we see the steps by which knowledge moves us to supernatural action, while supernatural action leads to greater knowledge. It is an ascending spiral of growth in the spiritual life.

It is all due to the Holy Spirit, who moves us and inspires us, and to the Father, who makes us capable of it by sending us his Son.

*Texts:*

(a) We have been praying for you, unceasingly . . .

Since everything in the supernatural order is due to God's loving-kindness, prayer is essential to obtain his graces. It is both useful, and of obligation for the Apostle, who must pray for the others.

(b) that you may be filled with that closer knowledge . . .

This idea of knowledge is fundamental in this letter; but to what does it refer? Mainly to the will of God for his Son and the mystery of his redemption; but also to the designs of God's providence with regard to us, to which we have to bow down in filial obedience.

God makes his will known; and he who does not follow it is abandoned by him, and goes from bad to worse. But he who does it, more or less binds God to help him even more and to guide him.

(c) all wisdom and all spiritual insight. . .

It would not seem to be Paul's intention to distinguish between the gifts in this passage, but merely to oppose the wisdom granted by the Spirit to that of the false doctors.

However, theologians have seen in the gift of wisdom the knowledge of first principles, and in that of knowledge a practical application of those principles.

(d) may you live as befits his servants . . .

This is how the knowledge of dogma leads logically, if we wish to be logical, to the practice of it in a true Christian life. You have known the will of the Father, which is that you should be saved by incorporation into his Son, as the body of Christ, the head. For that reason the idea that we should be faithful to him is one frequently repeated in Paul's letters (Eph. 4. 1).

This life as befits his servants has three elements:

- i. *gratitude*, which demands that we keep his laws;
- ii. *fruits*, in the form of good works, the virtues;
- iii. *growth without ceasing*. The life of faith is on its way to death if it does not grow. The incredulity of many is due to the lack of practice of virtue.

iv. may you be inspired, as his glorious power can inspire you, with full strength to be patient and endure. . . .

Difficult verse to translate; but the idea is clear. The door to the kingdom is a narrow one; but there is no need for us to despair, because if our strength is not sufficient, the power of God is at our disposal. He gives his gifts, not in proportion to our nothingness and weakness, but in proportion to his goodness and power. At first the lack of proportion between the difficulties and our strength might seem terrible, but with the divine help it has swung in our favour.

(e) to endure joyfully . . .

Two virtues on which Paul insists frequently; perhaps because they were so necessary when Christianity" was taking its first steps, in the midst of persecution. However, patience is necessary in any fight, and joy is necessary" to overcome the sadness produced by the struggle itself. If they despise you and make you suffer, says St Francis, then that is true joy, because then we are more like Christ our Lord, and because there is no danger of deception in these virtues.

## B: The Gospel: Matthew 24. 15-35

### *General remarks:*

To avoid repetition we refer our readers to the first Sunday of Advent for more details.

The first thing which should be noticed is that our Lord replies with care and precision to the question about the destruction of Jerusalem, while he leaves in shadow the reply to that of the end of the world, the coming of which will be sudden and will surprise men, just as did the flood in the days of Noe. Even he, as the Messias, dedicated to reveal divine truth to men, knows nothing about it.

The second thing, which makes this a difficult passage to interpret, is that our Lord does not reply systematically to the questions, but seems to pass from one to another and then back again. Thus verses 15-28 refer to Jerusalem; 29-31 to the end of the world: 32-33 again to Jerusalem. The verses before and after these may refer to either event.

There have been many and varied explanations, from that of those who think that the Evangelists have mixed two separate discourses of the Lord in one, to those who say that Christ deliberately made the answer obscure, perhaps because it would not be wise at that time to talk of wars against Rome.

With reference to the way our Lord presents the doctrine, as if one event would follow the other, that is typical of Jewish prophetic sayings and apocalyptic literature in general. The prophets often speak as though they saw no perspective, but all things in one. This



is obvious in Isaias, for example, with the pictures of Israel's captivity and the coming of the Messiah joined into one.

There is a logical relation between the two events if we remember that one is the symbol of the other. Before the year 70 there were many great disasters; there was the famine in the year 46; an earthquake which did great damage in 62; the burning *of* Rome in 64 and the bloody wars of 68. We know of the persecutions against the Christians from the Acts; Tacitus might well say of that era: It would appear that God cares no longer for our safety, but for his own revenge. Josephus is even stronger in his comments on the judgement of God against the Jewish people.

*Texts:*

i. *The destruction of Jerusalem:*

(a) When you see . . .

Our Lord begins to use the prophetic style to announce great calamities. Dan. 9. 26 and 12. 11 announce this abomination of desolation, the troops who profane the sanctuary and bring about the end of the sacrifices there, but it is not clear to whom it refers.

(b) then those who are in Judaea . .

The early Christians took notice of this, and those in Jerusalem fled to the mountains under their leader, a bishop called Simon.

(c) not going down . . .

The idea is that he should descend by the outside staircase, not bothering to go into the house—there is no time.

(d) for there will be distress then . .

The best witness is Josephus, who says: The misfortunes of all the previous centuries appear small to me compared with those the Jews had to suffer. The blood of Christ was indeed upon their heads.

2. *The end of the world:*

From verse 22 it would appear that the Lord begins to speak to his questioners about the end of the world, present to his thoughts at this moment. The fall of the Holy City is only the first act in the drama of the judgement *of God* against evil. Just as the profanation of the temple will come before its destruction, so the Antichrist, seated in the temples and proclaimed as god, will come before the end. It helps if we read chapter 12 of Daniel.

(a) if a man tells you, See, here is Christ. . .

The apocalyptic style grows ever more obvious. The sense is plain. Take no heed of those who announce to you that here is a new messias, because the true one is already come; above all, realize that, when that day comes, no one can go into hiding, just as there is no corpse which can hide itself from the vultures.

(b) immediately . . .

After these tribulations—but the time is not specified—there will be disturbances in the sun and moon, etc. We have elsewhere said (first Sunday of Advent) that there is the possibility of a cosmic disturbance of some kind, but that, in any case, these descriptions, just as that of the terror they inspire, are common in prophetic announcements of a great calamity (Isaias 13. 10; Amos 8. 9; Ezech. 32. 7-8).

### 3. *Warnings:*

They are developed in the parable of the ten virgins and the talents—the lesson is: Watch! The lesson is clear, he who is faithful to the commandments need not worry, because he will never be surprised when this day comes. Heaven and earth may pass, but his words, never. A perfect completion to the teachings of divine truth.

### 4. *Applications:*

We should never forget this judgement, anticipating it by a careful examination of our works. But the circumstances in which this gospel was read and the sentiments it aroused in the early Christians, lead us to other considerations, within the spirit of the text.

The destruction of Jerusalem. It is not a good quality in a judge to give his sentence without consideration of the evidence. All the year we have been examining the state of the Jewish people and we have listened to prophecies of Christ announcing his triumph; yet we have seen no signs of it—now we must read the last act in the drama, the terrible tragedy of Titus, walking among the ruins of the city.

But it is more than a material city, it is a symbol which represents souls. The Lord also calls them as the hen calls her chicks. Let them, too, remember the terrible end of this city!

A passage of Paul's letter to the Ephesians comes to mind here. He explains to us the plans the Father has with regard to Christ: It was his loving design, centred in Christ, to give history its fulfilment by resuming everything in him ... (1.9 ff.). There is little real difference between the interpretation of the Latin Fathers (using the Vulgate) and the Greeks; the former see in this passage a reference to the restoration of all things in grace, through Christ; the latter see Christ taking every being back to himself, just as the principle of love sums up all the other commandments (cf. Rom. 13. 9, where the same word is used).

Christ is the Head of all things, and in that day he will take them all to himself, because he is the bond which unites them all with God in the perfect union of their beauty. In the supernatural order he is the bond which brings all things into union with God, since all

salvation is through him, in him, and from him. Christ is the centre from which all begins and in which all ends; an idea which makes the arguments for a universal judgement more convincing still. Then the final enemy, death, will be completely overcome, and then the just will see their redemption completed, when their bodies too join in the joy of the resurrection.

It is not to be wondered at that the early Christians desired the coming of that day and thought of it as near at hand. The few phrases in the writings of the very early Fathers also speak of the same anxiety. Later writers present the martyrs to us as crying out in hope, waiting for the day of Christ. All these thoughts and aspirations can help us to re-live this day, and in spite of all the spiritual and material difficulties of life, lead us, too, to say with St John in the last words of the Apocalypse: Come, Lord Jesus.

## SECTION III. THE FATHERS

### I. ST IRENAEUS

(Important in so far as it lets us see how these early writers thought of the second coming of Christ. Cf. PG. 7, 549.)

*Faith in Christ, the judge:*

The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith; she believes in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God, and his coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father, to gather all things in one, and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, and Saviour and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, every knee should bow . . . and that he may execute judgement upon all; that he may send spiritual wickedness, and the angels who sinned and became apostates, together with the profane, ungodly and unrighteous among them, to everlasting fire. On his just, however, he will confer immortality, on those who have kept his holy commandments, and who have persevered in his love, some from the very beginning, others from the moment of their repentance. These he will surround with everlasting glory.



## II. ST CYPRIAN

(It is useful to see how these early Christians looked on martyrdom and the second coming of Christ» For that reason we shall give various extracts from St Cyprian in which he speaks of these events.)

i. Cyprian to his brother, Successus, greeting.... Those have come whom I sent to the Holy City for that purpose, that they might find out and bring back to us the truth, in whatever manner it had been decreed against us, for many varied and uncertain things were current in men's opinions. But the truth concerning them is as follows, that Valerian had sent a rescript to the Senate to the effect that bishops and priests and deacons should be punished immediately; but that senators and men of importance, including Roman Knights, should lose their dignity and be deprived of their property<sup>7</sup>. If, when their means were taken away, they should still persist in being Christians, then they should lose their heads; but that matrons should be deprived of their property and banished.

Moreover, people of Caesar's household, those who had either confessed before or should now confess, should have their property confiscated and be sent to slavery' on Caesar's estates. . . . But know that Xistus was martyred in the cemetery on the eighth day of the ides of August, and with him four deacons. Moreover the prefects of the city are daily urging on this persecution; so that if any are brought before them, they are martyred and their property claimed by the State.

I beg that you may make these things known to the rest of your colleagues, that in every place, by their exhortation, the brethren may be strengthened and prepared for the spiritual battle, and that every' one of us may think less of death than of immortality; that all, dedicated to the Lord with full faith and entire courage, may rejoice rather than fear at this confession, wherein they know that the soldiers of Christ are not slain, but crowned.

2. Cyprian to the priest Rogatianus and the other confessors, greetings. Heretofore, beloved brethren, I had sent you a letter in which I congratulated you on your faith and virtue, and now my object is to repeat the announcement of the glory' of your name. For what could I wish more or better in my prayers than to see the flock of Christ enlightened by your testimony? Although all the faithful should rejoice in this, yet first and foremost it is the privilege of the bishop. In proportion as we grieve over those whom a hostile persecution has cast down, so we rejoice over you, whom the devil has not been able to overcome.

Yet I admonish you, by our common faith, that having won the victory' on this first encounter, you should hold fast to your glory-through your brave and persevering virtue. We are still in the world.

still on the field of battle. We fight daily for our lives. You must take care that, after such a beginning as this, there should also be an increase, and that what you have begun to be should be perfected in you. It is a slight thing to be able to attain anything; but it is more to be able to maintain what you have accomplished; even as faith itself gives life, not by being received merely, but by that perfection which keeps man for God....

We must persevere in the straight and narrow road of praise and glory; and since peacefulness, humility and the tranquillity of a good life is a thing which is most fitting for all Christians ... it more befits you confessors, who have been made an example to the rest of the faithful, to observe and fulfil this, as being those whose lives should induce imitation in others.... This, indeed, I am grateful to say, most of you are careful about; and improved by the glory of your confession, you preserve that glory by your tranquil and virtuous lives.

But I hear that some infect your number and destroy the praise of a distinguished name by their corrupt conversation; whom you yourselves, as lovers and preservers of your own good name, should rebuke, check and correct... .

Let us confirm one another by mutual exhortations, and let us more and more go forward in the Lord; so that when, of his mercy, he shall have brought about that peace which he promises to give, we may return to the Church new and almost changed men, and may be received, either by our brethren or by the pagan, in all things corrected and renewed for the better; thus those who formerly admired our courage, may now admire the discipline in our lives....

### m. ST CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

(The summary of his teaching on the last coming, from *Catech.* 15 and 18.)

We announce to you the coming of Christ, not one coming, but the second, which will be even more brilliant than the first. Because the latter had signs of humiliation mixed with it, but in the second coming he will wear his royal crown.

As we have told you, all things in Christ have two facets, thus for instance, his was a double birth, one as God before time was, the other of the Virgin; there are two comings as well, the first obscure and without noise, the second, which will take place in all his glory. ... The Lord will come, not now to be judged, but to call to judgment those who judged him; he will say now to those evil men who insulted him during his crucifixion: You did this, and I remained silent. Then he came in all sweetness to teach all men the way of salvation; but later, whether they like it or not, they will have to

submit to his yoke. . . . You know the way to make sure that, when you come to be judged, you will be found on the right side. Keep the deposit of faith; doing good works and thus, standing with confidence before the judge, you will attain heaven.

The principle of all good actions is the hope of future resurrection, because it is the sight of the reward which sustains the soul, encouraging it to undertake good works. Thus, too, the workman is ready to labour, because he sees ahead of him the recompense; but those who labour with no hope of reward soon fail in body and spirit. . . . In the same way, the one who hopes in the resurrection keeps himself in check and forces himself to live a good life; but he who does not have this hope is soon lost on the road to perdition.

He who believes that his body will one day rise again, takes good care not to stain it by fornication; he who does not believe gives himself up to his lust and abuses his body as if it were an alien thing. Thus it is a precept of the Church that we must believe in the resurrection of the dead. This dogma, which is easily proved to be true, is great and necessary, even though contradicted by many....

How is this body to be joined together again? It happens, what is more, that of those birds which devour the bodies of the dead, one may die in Asia, another in Persia. . . . For you, small and weak man as you are, India is a long way away, so is Persia; but for God who holds the whole earth in the palm of his hand, everything is near....

Take counsel within your hearts and see how the very reason of justice demands it. You, for instance, have servants, of whom some are good and others bad. You favour the good and punish the evil. If you, then, being mortal men, observe the rules of justice, shall God, the Lord of all, not be just to each one? It would be blasphemy to deny it. Listen then to what is said. Many assassins have died in their beds without ever being punished. Where is the justice of God? At times one who is guilty of forty murders pays once and for all, then they behead him. With what will he pay the debt for the other thirty-nine? Were there no judgement and retribution after this life you might complain that God is not just; therefore do not wonder if the judgement is a long time coming. Every wrestler is rewarded or put to shame after the fight is over, and the judge does not crown anyone while he is still fighting; instead he waits until all the combatants have finished so that the rewards and crowns can be fairly distributed. So God, while the struggle of this life still continues, helps the good it is true, but the real reward he leaves until the end....

The tree which is pruned grows again, and shall man, pruned from this world, not flower again? The grain which is sown and reaped remains in the barns, and shall man not remain? ... Let us compare the labour and see which implies most effort; to make a statue



which did not exist, or return to its former shape that which had lost it? God who brought us into being from nothing, can he not give us back that life after death? . . . A grain of wheat is sown in the earth, it dies and corrupts and it is now not fit for eating; but that same grain rises green and fresh from the earth, and although small when it fell into the earth, it is now most beautiful. Corn and the other seeds were made for our use. If that which was created for us returns to life after death, shall we not rise also for whom all these things were made?

As you can see, it is winter. The trees look dead. Where are the leaves of the fig tree? Where are the branches of the vine? In winter all is dry, in spring, green; and when the time comes everything returns to life. God, who saw our unbelief, gave to all these things an annual resurrection, so that, on seeing what takes place in these creatures who have no soul, we may believe what we are told about rational creatures.... He who gave life to these inferior and irrational creatures, will he not grant it to us, for whom all other things were made?

#### IV. ST AUGUSTINE

(In *Ennar. in Ps. 36* he has a homily on the apparent triumph of the wicked, in which he speaks of God's justice. The first paragraph is interesting for other reasons.)

##### 1. *What Christ did not know:*

God intends to hide the last day from us, so that our hearts may be always prepared for something which we know will come, although we do not know when. . . . Even the Son of God made man says that he does not know that day, because it did not belong to his mission to teach it. It is not that the Father knows something of which the Son is ignorant, since the Father's knowledge and wisdom are also his.... Not merely did he teach as our Master but also he kept silent as a good teacher should. . . . It is a way of putting it, this, saying that the Son does not know those things which he does not teach, an expression which is equivalent to saying that he is ignorant when he leaves us ignorant.

What is our object in this discourse? Simply to explain to you that the last day will come, for our benefit, and that we do not know when, for the same reason, so that living justly always, we shall not merely lose our fear of that day, but we shall desire it; because just as it will increase the sufferings of the unfaithful, so it will put an end to the troubles of the faithful. You can now choose one thing or the other, but when that day comes you will have no choice. Choose now, because God in his mercy hides from you that which his same mercy had put off for a time.

2. *In all social classes:*

In all walks of life and professions we find the good and the bad, to which the Gospel refers when it says that one shall be taken and another left. Some are in the fields, where I rejoice to see the Church, God's farmer, whose labourers and priests are some of them good, others evil. There are people at the mill, which I like to think of as those who govern nations, of whom some know how to gain their eternal home through the right use of the mammon of iniquity, while others work their condemnation through it. Others are taken and left while in their beds, that is, in the midst of a simple life in which they do not dare to attempt great things, but in which there are also good and bad. Let all prepare themselves, because this is still the time when God speaks to us and does not judge us, in which useful penance can be done.

3. *The complaint of the good man:*

There is one thing which disturbs the Christian man, it is the sight of the apparent happiness of the wicked, their abundance in material things, their health, their eminence in dignity. . . . If God, you may say to me, really does look after human affairs, would that wicked man flourish and my innocence suffer so?

That which appears a long time to you is ver}' short to God; be united with him and it will be short for you, too. The grass of the fields is light, superficial and without deep roots. It dries up under the rays of the summer sun. We are now in winter; your glory is not visible, but if your heart has sent out deep roots, like the trees in winter, the cold will pass, the summer will come—that is, the judgement—and then the green of the grass will turn brown, and the glory of the tree will burst forth.

4. *The justice of God:*

He will prosper thee, making thy honesty clear as the day, the justice of thy cause bright as the sun at noon (Ps. 36. 6). That is, as a wondrous light, because it is not enough simply to say, light; there is the light of the dawn, the light of evening, but the clearest light shines at noon. Your justice will shine, not merely as the light, but as the light of noon. Now we live by the faint light of hope, following what we see not; while the unfaithful man laughs at us, in the full light of his triumphs. . . . And when will this noonday judgement come: When Christ appears, who is our life, on the day of judgement and brings together all men to judge them according to their works.. .. Perhaps you may not receive your reward at the moment, because you are not capable of it. God can give it, but you cannot receive it. Make an effort, work the vineyard and at the end of the day ask for your wages, because he is faithful to his promises who has contracted you.

5. *Do not allow the prosperity of the wicked to worry you:*

I already do that; I obey, I pray, but my neighbour, a robber and an adulterer, continues in triumph to the point of looking down on me in his pride. You are still sick; continue to take your medicine. They prosper, but only in their own line. You are working in God's way. They find their happiness on route and their unhappiness on arrival; you are unhappy on the journey but happy when its end comes. . . .

Why should you be angry? You believe in Christ; and what has he promised you? If it were happiness in this world then you would have a just complaint; but if it is reward after the resurrection, then why do you complain? Do you want the servant to be better off than the master? He suffered many things for you—blows, insults, the cross and death. Was he worthy of such things, being the just one? And of what are you not deserving, sinner that you are?

6. *How long, O Lord?*

But, how long is this situation going to last? You are in a great hurry. Your illness makes you think that the time is very long. To a sick man it seems that they are taking ages to bring him that glass of cold water, yet his family are hurrying as best they can. See our doctor, see how gentle he is with the impatient sick and says to him: Forbear yet a little and the sinner will be seen no more; thou wilt search in vain to find him (Ps. 36. 10). . . . Resist a while yet; you will receive your reward for your patience. . . . How long does the life of a man last? Give me the number of years you please; extend that to a ripe old age. And what? It is merely a summer's breeze. Even though the day of judgement, that last retribution for the good and the evil, may be far off, your last day cannot be so far away. Prepare for it, because as you leave this life, so will be the life you enjoy. After this, our short life, you may not reach at once that moment in which you will hear: Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive ye the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. But you will already be in that place from which the poor man, covered with his wounds, saw the proud and useless suffering in flames. In that peace you will be able to wait, safe and sound, for the day of judgement, when you will receive your body again and see yourself so changed that you will appear to be an angel.

7. *The fate of the sinner:*

Certainly, the sinner is useful. God uses him to prove the virtue of the just, as he used the devil to prove Job or Judas to betray Christ. Yes, the sinner is useful in this life. He is in his place here, as the crucible of the jeweller is in its right place on the fire. The wood bums to purify the gold, and the evil man sets his wicked traps for the just, to prove him. But once this time has passed, then



the evil will pass with it, because then they are useless. By giving them power and honours here, God has made a scourge of them....

8. *Thoughts on death and the judgement:*

(Extracts from a short sermon on the text: Of that day or hour no one knows ... PL. 38, 589-590.)

We are not told the day or the hour so that we will live in perpetual vigilance, because the eternal day will be the same as our last day on this earth.

We can live like men, or like sons of God. The damned preferred to live like men, when they were called to live like sons of God; therefore they receive the sentence of Ps. 81. 7. You shall die like men. Live like sons of God and you will reign with God.

Death is certain; therefore use it for your advantage, since it is a lesson in humility and the gate to heaven. Only death is certain. All other evils are uncertain. A child has been conceived; but he may not be born; that is uncertain. Perhaps he will grow; perhaps not; perhaps he will reach old age, perhaps not; he may be rich, he may be poor. . . . But is it possible to say, perhaps he will die, perhaps not? When the doctors examine a sick person and find him incurable they say: He will not save himself from death. From the moment when a man is born we must say the same thing—he will not be free from it. As soon as he is born he begins to grow sick. When he dies, his illness is ended, although he does not know if he is going to exchange it for a worse one. The rich man ended his delicious illness; and he changed it for one of torments. The poor beggar, on the other hand, ended his, and attained salvation. He had afterwards what he had chosen here and reaped what he had sown.

Christ overcame the world by making himself man and by dying for us. Let us, then, unite ourselves to our victor, that we may win the victory with him.

## V. ST EPHRAEM

1. *The Cross:*

Christ, the King, restorer of our health; grant me the grace to come alive from the tomb on the day of your coming, and that, when your majesty is made manifest, I may be at thy right hand.

Let us adore, O Lord, your cross, in which are all our hopes of salvation and which will be the one thing that gives immortality to our bodies. My eyes await thy redemption, my ears the saving words of your judgement. Do not leave me abandoned in the tomb, you who are the only hope of the dead....

2. *The plea for a glorious resurrection:*

My days have flown by like a dream, my years like an illusion; the burden of my sins shows me the tremendous judgement of divine justice and I am afraid. For which reason I cry with the prophet: Enter not into judgement with thy servant, O Lord.

Be ashamed to leave me in the tomb, for you are a merciful God; give me back what I have lost in my body, moved by your compassion, so that I may be in new beauty when you come, and may merit to be received into your kingdom.... Remember me, O Lord, and forgive this guilty one. I am the work of thy hands. He made me and shaped me. The day will come when you call the dead to life again; I beg of you that, on that day, you will not separate me from your company. May your power help me, which once gave me being; I am the plaything of the devil; therefore I beg of you to suppress your anger. . . .

3. *Your words alone will not pass away:*

Valiant fighter! The day of judgement will see the end of your labours; you entered the arena and you have come forth victorious, you have finished the race, you have kept the faith, and the Son of God will reward your efforts. That day will be for you a day of reward. . . .

Sons, listen to your father's teaching and the last Mil and testament of his inheritance. Both come from the Lord and will remain for ever. Apart from his teaching, all things pass away. The world will end; its illusions and sufferings; only life will remain, and that in those who have lived well and have used it to gain merits. These alone, at the end of time, will go in search of the king, who will come in his majesty. The good things that he has taught us will not pass; therefore give me, my dear brethren, this consolation, that you -will all walk in truth and sound doctrine, for thus, when the Spouse deigns to appear, I may rejoice in the happiness of my children.

Yes, I find myself obliged to leave all the goods that I had accumulated, even my garments; and stripped and poor, I must leave this world. All the riches I possessed, and even life itself, abandon me; honours, the treasures that remain within my tomb. They cannot go any further with me than that. . . . Rich and poor, come here and see the transformation of all that is ours and the end of all these things.... You, Lord, are the only hope of those who die, the very life of the dead, even though for you they are not lost, not dead; merely sleeping. . . . Accordingly, my God, just as you cleanse me from the stains of my sins by your grace, let no one close to me the gates of entry into the glory which is promised to virtue.

## SECTION IV. A THEOLOGIAN

## ST THOMAS AQUINAS

(On the first Sunday of Advent we have given a summary of St Thomas's doctrine on the judgement taken from the *Summa*. Now that must be briefly completed by the teaching in *Opusc.* 13.)

I. *Christy our judge according to his human nature:*

## (a) Because he is our redeemer:

He redeemed us in his human nature, won for us the prize of glory; therefore it should be in that same nature that he distributes the rewards and punishments.

## (b) that the evil may be judged as well:

Were they to see God face to face they would have received their reward, which they are unworthy of by their sins. It is therefore convenient that God should judge them, not in his divine nature, but as man. In this way he can judge both the good and the bad, without the latter receiving any reward whatsoever.

## (c) as a reward for his humiliation:

He went to the extent of submitting himself to the judgement of a human judge, who, moreover, judged him unjustly. As a reward for this, God made him the judge of all mankind, living and dead.

2. *Christ, the judge in glory:*

Since this judicial power of Christ pertains to his triumph, as does the glory of the resurrection, he will not appear at the judgement in humility, which pertains to his period of merit, but in the glory which is proper to his reward.

## (a) For the good:

This will be a fresh motive for joy.

## (b) For the wicked:

It will mean weeping and confusion, because the glory and power of the judge cause fear in those who fear condemnation.

## (c) Judge with his wounds:

Even though he appears in glory, still the signs of his passion will also be there with him, not as defects, but resplendent in glory, so that the elect, on seeing then, may rejoice on recognizing that they were redeemed by the passion of Christ, and sinners be saddened because they have despised so great a benefit.

3. *Triple judgement of Christ:*

God gave all power of judging into the hands of his Son, and according to St Thomas this judgement is threefold:



## (a) For the government of men:

Human life is regulated by the just judgement of God, and there is no reason to doubt that this also is in the hands of Christ, since in his human nature he is seated at the right hand of God, in so far as from him he receives the power to judge.

## (b) The particular judgement:

There is another judgement of God by which each one is given, at death, what he deserves, at least so far as the soul is concerned. The just remain with Christ; sinners are buried in hell. This discrimination cannot be made without a judgement of God, and this also is proper to Christ....

## (c) The universal judgement:

Since the retribution given to men pertains not only to the soul, but also to the body which is taken up again by the soul at the moment of resurrection, and since all retribution requires a judgement, it is necessary to postulate another judgement in which men are rewarded according to their works, not only in the soul, but also in the body. This judgement is also due to Christ, since he died for us, rose from the dead for us, and ascended into heaven. So also he raises us, in our bodies, taking them to his own glorious body and to heaven, the way to which he opened up to us. This resurrection will take place at the end of the world, and will comprise all men and at the same time. Therefore the judgement also will be of all, and together.

4. *Three aspects of the judgement:*

There are three things common to all judgements: the appearance of those to be judged before him who is to judge them, the discussion of the case, the sentence.

## (a) Presentation:

All will have to appear before Christ, from the first man to the last, even children who have died with or without baptism.

## (b) Discussion of merits:

In this respect not all will be judged. Such discussion is only necessary when there is good mixed with evil. Where there is good with no admixture of evil, there will be no discussion; neither where there is evil without any admixture of good. There are good people who have despised the things of the world for Christ. Not that they have never sinned, but their sins were so light that they were easily pardoned by the fervour of their charity. These will not be submitted to the discussion of their merits.

Others, living in the world, made use of the things of the world, not against God, but with too much affection for them, and these have a quantity of evil mixed with their good to such an extent that it is not easy to appreciate which prevails in their case. These will be judged with discussion of their merits.

Those who are without faith also lack good, and they will not be judged by a discussion of their merits; but if they have faith, even without charity, they do possess something which unites them to God and therefore there will be a discussion of merits in their case.

(c) Sentence:

All will receive it, for good or evil, glory or punishment.

5. *Circumstances of the judgement:*

(a) The way it will be done:

There will be an examination, but not in words. There is no need for it so that the judge may be informed of our state, as there is in human judgements, because all things are naked and clear to his eyes. But it is necessary so that each one may see, both with regard to himself and others, that they are worthy of praise or blame, and so that the good may rejoice at the justice of God and the evil be furious with themselves.

No need here to think of examinations in words; it will be done by the divine power and immediately, so that each one will see,

and them.

(b) Place :

Even though all, both good and bad, will accompany Christ, nevertheless, the good will differ from the bad, not merely in their merits, but also in the place of their judgement. The wicked, who separated themselves from Christ through their love of earthly things, will remain upon the earth; while the good will go out to meet Christ, being lifted up into the heavens, like him in glory and splendour.

It is thought that the place where Christ will judge will be near that where he suffered, according to Joel 3. 2. The sign of the cross and other signs of the passion will be manifested, for the terror of the wicked and the joy of the just.

6. *The saints also will judge:*

(a) By comparison :

They will judge us together with Christ by mere comparison, the good and the less good, the good and the wicked, the latter, those who are less wicked will judge those who are more so.

(b) by approval of the sentence:

All the just will approve the justice of God's sentence.

(c) by a share in his judicial power, as he promised (Matt. 19. 28):

By the twelve tribes we must not understand Israel merely, but all the faithful; in the same way, by the twelve apostles we must

not understand merely those twelve, but also all those who, leaving all things, followed Christ. This is reasonable, because judgement implies indifference on the part of the judge; these are completely indifferent to earthly things, so they merit this dignity.

7. *The resurrection of the body:*

The soul will dwell in the same body it had before.

(a) The same body and all its members . . .

At the resurrection the soul will have the same body as it had before; because, since the soul is the same it should have the same matter as it had before, numerically; with all its members, even though the actions to which they were destined may cease. The whole of man must be raised from the dead, and without these members the body would not be complete. If we are to be rewarded or punished according to the acts we have performed, then it is right and fitting that the same members as before should share in that reward or punishment.

(b) with no defects:

Such defects are contrary to the integrity of our nature; if this has to be fully restored, then those defects must disappear, especially when we remember that the resurrection will be the work of the divine power, which knows no defects.

8. *The signs which will appear before the coming of Christ:*

(a) There will be signs:

Christ, when he comes to judge, will appear in a glorious form, as befits a judge, and this same dignity demands that there should be certain signs which will induce his subjects to give him his due reverence and subjection.... It is not an easy thing to say what they will be.

(b) Cannot be determined exactly:

The signs which are mentioned in the Gospels do not pertain merely to the end of the world but also to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the coming of Christ to his Church on certain occasions. . . . Some of them, such as wars, etc., have existed since the beginning of the world; unless we are prepared to say that they will be even more fierce at that time.

(c) The sun darkened, etc. . . .

At the coming of Christ this will not happen, because then he will renew all things, but as a sign of that coming it is possible that there may be this darkening, either at various times or at once, so as to infuse terror into men.

(d) the powers of heaven shall be moved . . .

This may mean all the heavenly powers, who will be astonished at the change which is taking place in the world.



Or it may be taken to mean one choir of angels, the powers, who occupy themselves with the movements of the heavenly bodies, in which case it may mean that they cease in their office and that those bodies do not move—just as the angel guardians will no longer have their office.

(e) the purification of the world by fire . . .

This is necessary for the renovation of all things—including the earth—at the coming of Christ. The earth has seen many sins and those places where sin has been committed must be purified together with the rest. Fire is the appropriate element for this because of its power to purify; it is the noblest of all the four elements.

## SECTION V. SPIRITUAL WRITERS

### I. ST TERESA OF AVILA

#### 1. *The last judgement:*

(a) The judgement of God, so different from that of men:

There is no ground here for either approval or condemnation. We must base our judgement on the virtues. The most holy will be she who serves the Lord with the greatest mortification, humility and purity of conscience. Little, however, can be known with any certainty about this on earth, not until the true Judge gives each his deserts. Then we shall be amazed to see how different his judgement is from the ideas we have formed upon earth (*Interior Castle*, xi. 10).

(b) The clarity of the judgement:

Let us say that the Godhead is like a clear diamond, much larger than the whole world, or a mirror. . . . Let us suppose that all we do is seen in this diamond, which is of such a kind that it contains everything in itself, because there is nothing capable of existing outside that greatness. It was a terrifying thing for me to see, in such a short space of time, so many things at once in that diamond's depths, and whenever I think of it, it is a most bitter reflection, that so many foul things, such as my sins, should have been mirrored in that clearness and purity....

Oh, that someone could reveal this to those who commit the most foul and dishonourable sins, and could make them realize that their sins are not hidden; that, committed as they are in his own presence, God justly grieves for them, that we are acting in his presence with the greatest lack of reverence! I saw how truly one mortal sin merits hell! It is impossible to understand how grave an offence it is to commit such a sin in the sight of such great Majesty, and how far from his nature are such things. Thus his mercy becomes ever

more clearly seen, for though he knows that we are doing all this, still he bears with us.

This has also made me wonder; if one such experience as this leaves the soul terrified, what will the judgement day be like, when his Majesty will reveal itself clearly to us and we shall see the offences we have committed. God help me, how blind I have been ... (*Life*, 40. 10).

(c) Christ's look:

O children of men, how long will you be hard of heart and fight against this gentle Lord Jesus? What is this? Is it possible that our wickedness may prevail against him? No; for human life is short as the grass, and the Son of the Virgin will come and pass that terrible sentence. Powerful God of mine, since thou shalt judge us, whether we wish it or not, why do we not consider how important it is to please thee against that hour? Yet who would not wish to have so just a judge? Blessed are they who, at that moment, shall rejoice with thee, my Lord and my God! When thou hast raised up a soul and it has realized how miserably it has ruined itself to gain some brief pleasure and is ready to please thee and thou dost help it with thy favour . . . what help is there, Lord, for such a soul, to enable it to live, instead of dying with the remembrance of having lost all the good that it would have were it in a state of baptismal innocence? The best life that soul can live is one which sorrow for sin turns into death. Yet how can the soul that dearly loves thee endure this? (*Exclamations*, III.)

2. *Purgatory*:

(a) Rare the soul that does not have to pass through it:

Here is a clear picture of what the day of judgement will be, when we shall behold the majesty of this king and see the rigour of his judgement upon those who are evil. Here we find true humility, giving the soul power to behold its own wretchedness of which it cannot be ignorant. Here is shame and genuine repentance for sin; for though it finds God revealing his love for it, the soul can find no place to hide itself from God, and thus is utterly confounded. I mean that when the Lord is pleased to reveal himself to the soul, with so much of his greatness and majesty, the vision has such exceeding great power that I believe it would be impossible to endure, unless the Lord were prepared to help the soul... (*Life*, 28).

(b) The suffering in purgatory:

The understanding is keenly alert to discover why this soul is absent from God, and his majesty now aids it with a lively knowledge of himself, so that it causes the distress to grow, until the sufferer cries aloud. However patient a sufferer she may be, the soul cannot help doing this, because this pain, as I have said, is not in the body,

but deep in the soul.... While that natural heat of the body fails, the soul burns so fiercely within it that, if the flames were a little stronger, God would have fulfilled its desires. It is not that it feels any bodily pain whatsoever . . . which must be due to the fact that it is suffering so keenly within that it takes no notice of the body. In this case the soul feels nothing at all, and I do not believe it would feel anything were it cut into little pieces (*Interior Castle*, VI, xi).

## IL BOSSUET

### i. *The last end:*

#### (a) Journey without rest towards the end:

Human life is a journey; and at the end of it there is a dark precipice. We have been warned from the first step, but the law is inflexible—there must be an advance without a halt.... There are a thousand stumbles, a thousand sufferings! But if one could only avoid that dark abyss! But no; it is necessary to go onwards; necessary to run towards that end—the years pass so quickly. However, we console ourselves. There are things that distract us; flowers that bloom, water that flows. . . . We would long to rest; but the command is: Carry on! Carry on! We see that, as we advance, the things we leave behind vanish into inevitable ruin. We console ourselves because we have gathered some flowers in passing, in spite of the fact that they wither in our very hands. It is all an illusion, an enchantment. With dragging steps you see yourself approaching that abyss. Things begin to grow dim; the gardens have fewer flowers, and those they have are less brilliant, their colours are fading, the meadows are no longer smiling, the waters are muddy. All things begin to be blotted out—it is the shadow of death. But we must still journey on. We are now but one step from that abyss. Everything has vanished now, has escaped from our hands.

#### (b) The two ends:

I do not think it necessary to tell you that the road is life, the abyss, death. But death ends all evils, because it is the end. Oh, no! In that abyss there is a fire which devours, teeth which gnash, eternal weeping. The fire is not extinguished nor does the worm of conscience cease to gnaw. This is the path of the one who allows himself to be led by the senses; shorter for some than for others. At times people fall into it without realizing it, suddenly.

For the faithful soul . . . he is accompanied by Christ; he will despise all that vanishes and escapes from his hand. At the very edge of the abyss an invisible hand will bear him up, that of Christ; he will enter, as did Christ; he will die as did Christ, to triumph over death. Everyone who has this faith is happy . . . he possesses the



glory of the risen Christ who despised the passing joys that he might enjoy those that are eternal.

2. *The abomination of desolation:*

(a) That of the soul—sin:

Sin sets up a triple disorder in man:

- i. it separates him from his creator—this is the first and the root of the others;
- ii. it is not merely an illness, but also a profanation of the soul; just as, on the contrary, union with God sanctifies it;
- iii. the soul finds itself weak, sick, infirm in every way—spiritually it is dead.

(b) because of these three disorders, penance must also possess three qualities:

- i. if sin separates us from God, penance must unite us to him once more; therefore the first quality is reconciliation with God;
- ii. but if sin has brought about a spiritual sickness, weakness, infirmity in the soul, then penance must cure it. It must be a remedy as well as a reconciliation.
- iii. lastly, it must be of such a kind that it sanctifies the soul, against the profanation which is a result of sin. For that reason it is also a sacrament.

3. In the second part of the same sermon, dedicated to the sickness which is caused in the soul by sin, he says:

Sin has a double malice about it; on the one hand it causes us to lose justice; that is clear enough. But then it also brings in its train certain fatal consequences. It destroys the power of the soul, weakens us because it divides us; and all that is divided is weak (Matt. 12. 25). St Paul had cause to lament this same spiritual division between the soul and concupiscence. Sin leaves in us a new inclination which drags us down to evil and adds the weight of habit to that of our concupiscence. By thus fomenting the rebellion, it weakens our strength more and more. And what is so dreadful is that, even when sin is banished by penance, habits remain alive still. Experience has taught us that on many occasions; these evil habits are a breeding ground for new sins, a seed left by former ones, by which they soon spring up again. It is a piece of root from which the evil weeds will soon arise again....

Is it not, therefore, necessary that penance, the remedy for sin, should also have a double power, in opposition to this double evil? Dead to sin, we should set out to destroy the body of sin in us; which can be attained only by mortification and vigilance, both of which serve as preventatives.

## III. FERNAND PRAT, S.J.

## The kingdom of Christ and his coming

(A brief summary of the doctrine in his *Theology of St Paul*, 1. 6, c. 2.)

1. *The coming of the King:*

The Greek word, which means literally *presence*, was employed to describe an official visit of the emperor, during which money was struck, feasts were held, etc. In the Christian sense it means the coming of the Lord, the day of the Lord.

He arrives in the midst of his kingdom announced by a great apparatus of signs and wonders, as judge of all men, to take revenge on his enemies and reward his faithful friends.

The most significant factors of his coming are:

(a) The call by means of the imperial edict (1 Thess. 4. 15); the voice of the archangel (*ibid*), the trumpets (1 Cor. 15. 52)—all these are common to the appearances of God in the Old Testament.

(b) His court, made up of the angels (2 Thess. 1.7); the saints (1 Thess. 3. 13); the clouds of heaven (1 Thess. 4. 16; Matt. 24. 30; Mark 13. 26; Luke 21. 27); the fire (1 Cor. 3. 13).

Apart from these signs there are three others; the apostasy (Matt. 24.10-12; 2 Thess. 2. 3); the conversion of the Jews (2 Thess. 2. 5-12); and false Christs (Matt. 24. 23-24).

2. *The acts of his coming:*

One is the judgement, the other the handing over of the kingdom.

## (a) The judgement:

Immediately after the resurrection of the dead; the primitive catechesis insisted that it is universal, for all men, based on works (2 Cor. 5. 10), and also eternal in its consequences (Heb. 6. 2; 1 Thess. 4. 16).

## (b) The handing over of the kingdom:

The kingdom of Christ has two meanings in the New Testament.

i. Faced with the bad interpretation of it on the part of the Jews, Christ found it necessary to preach its true characteristics, showing himself as a founder of a new kingdom, but not in the manner of thinking of the Jews.

ii. Once the Church had been founded, then St Paul, without setting aside altogether the former meaning, dwells rather on its eschatological nature. This kingdom, to which the unjust, thieves, murderers, etc., will not belong, will begin with the triumphant second coming of Christ (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). It will mean the end of the present world and the beginning of a new one, a new order which will begin with the destruction of his enemies and the handing over of his real kingdom to the Father

All his adversaries are reduced to nothing; that is the end of all things and the handing over of the kingdom, because until all fall at his feet, his mission is not accomplished.

(c) But we must understand properly what this kingdom is which is handed over to the Father. The Word, as creator, will reign for ever—that kingdom is eternal. That of the Redeemer is strictly speaking a kingdom made up only of the just; and it is this which is handed over to the Father; although this does not mean that Christ has lost his power, any more than the Father lost his when he handed over the rights of the kingdom to his Son. Christ as man will retain the primacy of honour and universal dominion which the hypostatic union gave him. If the Church is a body, a society and a kingdom, he will remain its Head, priest and king, with whom we also shall reign eternally.

But beyond that, he is also the chief of a militant Church and has received the mission of leading her to victory behind his standard. This function will cease when there are no more enemies to fight; that is why God, on giving this part of the mission to his Son made man, assigned a logical limit to it—the moment when all things should be brought under his feet. Then the Son made man will also subject his and himself to the Father. The world will end and the eternal kingdom will begin.

## SECTION VI. LITERARY AND HISTORICAL NOTES

### A: The signs which preceded the fall of Jerusalem

According to the testimony of Josephus and Tacitus, there were certain extraordinary signs which went before the destruction of Jerusalem. During the whole year a comet was seen over the city, which had the form of a sword. Before the outbreak of war, the people had assembled on 8th April to celebrate the Pasch, and at three o'clock in the morning a most brilliant light shone round the Temple and the altar, lasting for half an hour and turning the night into day. The eastern gate of the Temple, called the gate of Corinth, which was made of bronze and needed nearly twenty men to close it in the evening, was suddenly flung wide open at midnight. On 21st May, before sunset, armies were seen in the sky over the whole region, assaulting towers and cities (2 Mach. 5. 2-3). On the feast of Pentecost, when the priests were exercising their function in the Temple for the evening sacrifice, they heard the sound of many voices, like those of a multitude in fright, shouting: Let us leave this place! But the most terrifying of all was a simple peasant named Jesus, son of Amanus. Four years before the war he suddenly began



to cry out in the Temple during the feast of Tabernacles: A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, against Jerusalem and the temple; a voice against husbands and wives, a voice against all the people.

He ran through the city repeating the same cry; was stoned and beaten, but still continued to cry out: Woe to thee, Jerusalem. Woe to thee!

### B: Methodius and King Borgias

It is said of King Borgias of the Bulgarians, a pagan much given to the hunting of wild beasts, so much so that he liked to see them in paintings, that he told a monk named Methodius to do him a painting which would fill all who saw it with terror. The prudent monk did nothing else but paint him a picture of the judgement. Then he called the king to see the painting. When he saw it, he was so terrified by that act of justice, when the Son of God judges mankind, the just are crowned and the wicked condemned, that he gave up his former evil ways and became a Christian.

### C: St Vincent Ferrer and Purgatory

Paradise, he used to say, is only given to those who really and truly desire and long for it. He who, in this life, did not fall in love with glory, even though he may have done works of penance, will have to pass through purgatory, in order to learn to long for it. . . . This happened recently to a man who had been a great penitent and who, after death, appeared to a friend of his and told him that he was in purgatory, in spite of his austere life, because he had never been really in love with the glory of heaven.

And purgatory, let us realize it, is not a mere formality, a little bath of fire or boiling water, such as we use to poach an egg or boil a fowl. It is a long, long torment, measured by a standard of time very different from that of this world. As a proof of that we have the case of that sick man who, having been a great sinner, had repented but without doing sufficient penance. Now he found himself ill, in the most dreadful pain, so much so that he prayed for death. His angel appeared to him and told him to choose which he would prefer, three years suffering on earth or three days in purgatory. The man chose the latter, but hardly had he died when the angel returned to visit him.

Traitor! shouted the man.

What is the matter?

You have deceived me, it is now three thousand years that I have been here.

Do you think so? Do you remember the time of your death?

Yes, at one o'clock.

Your parish priest was reciting the *Deus in adjutorium* then ... he has not yet reached the *Gloria Patri*. If you wish to return to earth I will take you.

He spent three years of patient illness amid great consolations.

## SECTION VII. SERMON SCHEMES

### I. LITURGICAL

#### The last coming of Christ

##### 1. *The coming of Christ and the liturgical year:*

###### (a) To make the feast live:

We are often told that, in the course of the liturgical year, the Church presents to us various feasts so that we may make them come alive for us and so gain benefit from them and the graces attached to them. It is not difficult for us to do this, because every feast has a historical background. On this last Sunday of the year we have to make this feast, too, come alive, thinking of the last coming at the end of time, a fact which will contribute a great deal to our moral and spiritual advancement.

###### (b) The justice of God:

Perhaps it is more difficult for us to make this live, because it lies in the future. But the Gospel does present to us a past event, the destruction of Jerusalem. There are two destructions here, both of them with a common factor, the justice of God. The best way to make this idea come to life is to present ourselves before that justice, as Jerusalem did, and as the world will have to present itself at the end of time.

##### 2. *A day of self-examination:*

It ends the liturgical year; a year of a chain of graces through which God sought to join us to himself and to his love. This is a day of examination, to see what we have been given and what we ourselves have given. Thus we shall see if we have simply buried the talents God has given us. The examination has two parts.

###### (a) The graces received:

We shall soon see if anything extraordinary has happened to us; prosperous or adverse, they are graces from God. Let us look mainly at the ordinary things of our lives; the grace to be still alive, inspirations which have enabled us to keep in the grace of God or regain it; the word of God, which like fertile seed, has fallen on to our soul; the sacraments we have received; the good example of our friends; the moments of prayer; humiliations, failures—so many graces of which only we know and so many others that have passed by unobserved by us.

## (b) Infidelities:

How have we corresponded with these graces ? We shall almost certainly find that we have been unfaithful. We see that sin piles up on sin, almost without possibility of counting them; that we have lived a life of tepidity and negligence in the fulfilment of our duties; that we preferred our comfort to our duty; that we protested in the face of humiliations and retreated before the idea of sacrifice. In a word, that our general reply to the graces of God was sin and infidelity.

3. *The hour of mercy:*

If we had to present ourselves today before the tribunal of our judge we would certainly tremble. If our lives were to end as the year ends now, we would be found wanting. But we are living now in the hour of mercy; there is still time, and with it hope for us. Even though we cannot count our sins, let us have confidence. I have thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You shall call on me, and I will hear you; and will put an end to your slavery (Introit). We must go to the Lord with unlimited confidence. He is both omnipotence and love. He will both forgive us and remedy our weakness. Let us go to him.

(a) Giving thanks to him, because he has made us capable of sharing in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. . . because he freed us from the power of darkness (Col. 1. 13); thanks for all the benefits, both material and spiritual, which we have received throughout the past year;

(b) asking pardon for our lack of co-operation, for our sins and infidelities;

(c) with a proposal to show more energy, more co-operation with those graces which we shall not lack in the future. A resolution to carry out the programme which today's liturgy offers to us.

4. *A programme of Christian life:*

The liturgy' gives it to us in the words of St Paul (Col. 1. 9-10).

5. *A new year, a change of ways:*

## (a) The petition in the Collect:

The new year which begins next Sunday will present us with new remedies. Through our co-operation we must make them more effective still. Therefore we pray: Stir up, O Lord, the good will of thy faithful, so that, co-operating ever more faithfully with the grace of the divine activity, they may receive from thy mercy ever greater remedies.

## (b) Let us not put off our conversion:

We may understand this conversion as not merely from infidelity to the faith, not merely from sin to grace, but also one from tepidity to zeal and fervour.



i. *The next liturgical cycle may be our last* ; let us make the most of the time by co-operating with the grace of God.

ii. *The parable of the barren fig tree* (Luke 13. 6-9). If this year it gives no fruit, cut it down.

(c) Let us make the diary of our life a beautiful one:

Bossuet says : God writes a diary of our lives ; a divine hand it is which writes down what we have done and what we have left undone. Our story will be read one day, and read by the whole of mankind. Let us make sure that it is a beautiful one. Let us rub out, through penance, all that might shame us. Let us awake, because the hour has come. Every day there are new motives for haste; death is approaching, sin is gaining ground and the time of the hardness of heart is drawing near.... Let us work for our salvation, since God sends us such a Saviour; Jesus Christ, who is going to come into a world full of grace and truth. Let us be faithful to his grace and attentive to his truth, so that we may share his glory.

## II. THE EPISTLE

That you walk worthy of God ...

1. *The ideas of the Epistle:*

(a) Written by Paul from his prison in Rome to the Church of the Colossians, it is one of those letters destined to reveal in detail the doctrine of the mystical body. Here he studies principally Christ, the head; while in the letter to the Ephesians he is more concerned with the Church as Christ's body.

(b) The synthesis of the ideas contained in the verses the Church sets down for us today is contained in the title of this scheme: walk worthy of God.

2. *In God's presence:*

That is what walking worthy of God means in practice.

(a) Paul laments the fact that, while we dwell in this mortal body, we are not in the presence of the Lord, since we walk by faith and not by vision (2 Cor. 5. 6-7).

(b) He at least would like to depart from this life to be with the Lord (*ibid.* n. 8).

(c) But whether present or absent, we make great efforts to be pleasing to him (*ibid.* v. 9).

(d) He is well aware of the hour of the judgement, so as to be a faithful servant of the Lord in this life. We all have to appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive the reward for what he has done while in the body, either good or bad (*ibid.* v. 10).

3. *True wisdom:*

The hopes of Paul for the Colossians are enclosed in a trenchant phrase, full of meaning: That you may be filled with that closer

knowledge of God's will which brings nil wisdom and all spiritual insight with it (1. 9).

(a) The gift of wisdom:

So as to please God in all things Paul asks for the gift of wisdom, which is at once both speculative and practical. Since it is a divine gift, it is very different in its counsels from the knowledge of the world.

(b) Through this gift we know the true value of things and of acts:

Consequently our will is directed aright, because the divine viewpoint of things is the light which guides it. It tells us how we can please our Lord in all things.

4. *Not activism^ but patience:*

Certain types of activism, by which we mean excessive activity, are dangerous and against the counsels of this gift, which Paul wishes to rule our lives.

(a) Excessive exterior activity is dangerous:

On the contrary, the sure path is the exercise of patience and meekness, which Paul suggests. True fortitude is better developed by resisting than by aggression.

i. Paul himself, who is the writer of this letter, is a perfect example of his own teaching. A most active apostle, he now had to spend two years in prison. His missionary activity will be limited to preaching the Gospel to the few who come to see him in his cell.

ii. Yet he is full of joy, as his letters from captivity tell us, because the divine omnipotence is manifested in his patience.

iii. The book of Proverbs tells us that the patient man is to be preferred to the strong, and he who has dominion over his own soul to the one who conquers cities (16. 32).

iv. There was a well-known saying in the early Church: Fortitude in action is proper to the Romans; patience in suffering, proper to Christians.

(b) A great consolation:

This is a great consolation for those who, against their will, are inactive; the old, sick, captives, etc. In them the word of God can produce a hundred per cent, fruit. An excellent sermon, to unite patience and joy, as the apostle does today.

(c) Patience and long-suffering:

i. *Long-suffering is a virtue connected with patience*, by which we endure, without retaliation, the offences we receive from people against whom we could invoke sanctions.

ii. *By this virtue we endure something we could avoid*; but looking at the good of the person who offends us and also the glory of God, we hold back punishment.

iii. *We imitate God himself* who does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he should repent and live.

5. *The inheritance of the saints:*

(a) This epistle infuses great hope into us that we also, at the day of judgement, may be found on the side of the children of light,

i. thanking God our Father for making us fit to share the light which saints inherit;

ii. for rescuing us from the power of darkness and transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1. 12-13).

(b) The apostle refers to the life of grace, which all Christians have through the remission of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. But he awakes our hopes that this life of grace will be the life of glory in heaven, because we are the heirs to the kingdom—heirs together with Christ (Rom. 8. 17).

(c) Like the prudent virgins in the parable, we shall watch and wait for the coming of Christ, thus fulfilling our baptism: Receive this burning light and keep your baptism so as to be without blame; keep the commandments of God, so that when the Lord shall come to the nuptials, you may go to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly court and enjoy eternal life.

## m. THE GOSPEL

### A: Heir to all things

1. *Theme:*

(a) We have followed Christ through all the stages of his humble life, and also in the glorious moments of his resurrection and ascension, but all these hidden from the world, like the triumph or persecution of his Church.

(b) Today, at the end of the liturgical year, in the midst of this terrible scene of the last judgement, we can see the designs of the Father with regard to his Son.

2. *The plan of the Father:*

(a) Christ, the heir (Heb. 1. 2):

i. when he created the world he thought of his Son, whose palace it would be;

ii. he gave his rational creatures their natural and supernatural life; but even that was not enough; he wished to join them to himself in a more intimate bond—that of the Incarnation; God takes man's flesh as one of us.



iii. This man-God lifted the whole of mankind up to a tremendous dignity, to an empire of love, peace and justice, which was God's dream for his people.

(b) The failure of sin:

Even this was taken into due consideration in God's plan; the God-Man would overcome sin, because he would save his people from it.

### The eternal kingdom of Christ

1. *The day of judgement:*

(a) But when shall we see that day?

The evil ones of the earth strut in their pride, Christ is denied by the infidels, disobeyed by the faithful. Death, the apparent Lord of the world, fruit of sin, reigns in the place of Christ.

(b) But God is not in a hurry; we should not be in a hurry either:

What appears to us to be a long time is a second or less to God. Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father where he makes his enemies his footstool. That glorious moment will come at the last day.

2. *Two things which must come before that glorious finale:*

The moment has come; all beings pay homage to Christ. The heavens are lit up; the angels hear that voice commanding them to adore him (Heb. i. 6).

3. *But before that final act there are two things which have to be done:*

(a) Death must be overcome:

At the voice of the angelic command the bodies of men must enjoy the fruits of that redemption—death, where is thy victory? where is thy sting?

(b) Divine justice:

The wicked are an obstacle on that day of justice and glory. They are enemies who must be placed under our Lord's feet, as his footstool. They can only give him glory by proclaiming his justice. They must be separated beforehand. That is why, once death is defeated, the judgement must follow at once.

4. *Christ presents himself to the Father:*

Death has been overcome, and now the only thing that endures is Christ and his Mystical Body.

(a) Then he goes to his Father:

- i. as the creator who goes accompanied by his creatures;
- ii. the Saviour who goes before those whom he has saved;

- iii. the Head who goes with his body;
- iv. the King before his subjects;
- v. as man, he will pay homage; as God he receives it.

(b) Keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me, that they may be one, as we are one ... but now I am coming to thee ... so that my joy may be theirs. . . .

(c) As long as I was with them, it was for me to keep them true to thy name . . . (John 17. 11-18).

(d) The creator gives back to God his creation; the Saviour, his redeemed . . . as a general who, at the moment of his triumph, pays homage to his king.

5. *The eternal kingdom begins:*

The kingdom of Christ and his Mystical Body.

(a) Is not the thought of that day enough to encourage us to fight by the side of our leader ?

(b) He is the first and the last, the alpha and omega. By him we were created; by him and in him we shall reign for ever.

B : The abomination of desolation standing in the holy places

1. *The threefold explanation of the phrase:*

As Christ tells us in the gospel, this expression is taken from the prophet Daniel (9. 27). He announces the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple, to which is joined the fall of Judaism.

(a) In the literal sense:

The butcheries of the Roman legionaries and their profanation of the temple. They set up their standards on the Mount of Olives.

(b) In the figurative sense:

This scene is a type or figure of the end of the world, as were the flood and the destruction of Sodom and also the death of the armies of Pharaoh in the Red Sea.

(c) A living image of the soul which has fallen into mortal sin:

And of its eternal ruin on the day of judgement unless it can be converted as soon as possible.

2. *Sin in the Christian\* especially in the priest or one consecrated to God:*

(a) It is an abomination in the eyes of God:

His majesty has been insulted by it, his dignity outraged, his love despised, his authority set aside. Before him are lifted up the idols of the passions and vices. This is even worse in the soul of one consecrated to him by the priesthood. He is officially dedicated to

the honour and cult of God and has now become his enemy; he has sinned against God, in whose sight he should be holy and make others holy.

(b) It is a desolation:

i. It has the effect on the soul of a devastating army, sacking and pillaging all around, never crying: Enough! All supernatural values are destroyed by sin, and often human values too.

ii. To the soul of a priest it is a special desolation; because he carries within him the treasures of God and hungers himself. What a contrast between his powers and the state of his soul!

iii. He is a dead instrument of life. A signpost—who does not move himself, but merely points the way. The devils rejoice at such a sight; the angels weep, and Christ weeps as he did once over Jerusalem. God usually punishes the sin of the priest with hardness of heart and loss of faith. Once that light goes out then the worst of evils follows.

(c) In the holy place:

i. The Christian soul, sanctified by the sacraments and the blood of Christ, is a holy city of God and his temple. Do you not know that you are the temples of God and that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you? (1 Cor. 3. 16).

ii. Above all, the soul consecrated by vows and the sacerdotal anointing, which makes us share in the very priesthood of Christ and dedicates us to God (Heb. 7. 26).

(d) A sign of eternal ruin:

i. From the moment when sin enters into the soul and all the time it reigns there, the soul cannot escape from its destruction. In its very guilt it carries its condemnation. If anyone profanes the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, whom you are (1 Cor. 3. 16-17). The devil and death do their best to break that slender thread which still remains, while all the time the soul is suspended over a deep abyss.

ii. It would seem that sin is a special sign of total ruin in the case of a priest, because on the one hand he becomes ever more insensible to the influence of grace, and on the other the cases of sudden death seem to be more common among priests.

(e) The abomination of sin in the soul is a warning from God:

Just as that of Jerusalem was a sign of its ruin. Divine providence uses sin to excite remorse in the sinner and urge him to penance, so that he may escape the ruin which threatens him. There are examples in David, Magdalen, the good thief. The prodigal son is one more example; through the consideration of his miseries he



found repentance. Meditation on our sins can be most useful; falls, if we make the best use of them, become an occasion of true humility, on which can be constructed the highest sanctity. Lack of confidence in ourselves so as to have more confidence in Christ. The fall of Peter did not prevent him from becoming the head of the Church.

## C: Judgement and truth

### 1. *Truth:*

This is what endures; that which passes away is but a dream.

### 2. *It is difficult to see the truth:*

Our criteria are bathed in so many different colours which makes things change to our eyes. Our likes, our appetites—all these mould the things about us, making us think that those things are eternal and true which are not so, in reality.

### 3. *When shall we know it?*

#### (a) After death:

When those coloured glasses drop from our eyes. Death is the first thing to take them from us. All created things desert us then, but not we ourselves. Truth is within us.

#### (b) At the judgement:

We are before God, and then a new light, the true light, will give us the true perspective of all things.

i. *Creatures are not true*—see how they all disappear on this day of judgement, and only God and man are left.

ii. *And what is there in man?* Honours, riches, pleasures ? There will be nothing said about them then, unless it is to show us their negative value, as a motive for our condemnation.

iii. *There remain only our actions—and Christ.* Christ is the model of truth; acts which have him for their standard are the only true ones.

### 4. *Christy the truth:*

(a) Let me remove the coloured glasses from my eyes and ask myself: What is there of real truth in my life ? What is there which is done according to the standards of Christ ? Am I meek and humble ? Do I love my neighbour? This is a standard which cannot fail (Matt. **ii**. 29; John 15. 12-13).

(b) If my actions are done from ambition, pride or the desire for the goods of this world, then they are the works of this world, have no truth in them, and will vanish. If they are works of mercy, humility, love for my neighbour, then they are true, will remain, and will hear the words of approval at the day of judgement. Come, ye blessed—because you gave me to drink, clothed me....

## D: The terror of the Last Judgement

1. *The historical setting:*

It is a good thing to present today's gospel in its historical setting so as to serve as a composition of place for the commentary we desire to make. It is the afternoon of Holy Tuesday. Christ retires with his disciples to Bethany. The disciples, to distract their Master, whose face is showing signs of sadness, point out to him the temple and its buildings. He only replies to them: Do you see all this? I tell you that a stone shall not be left on a stone. All shall be destroyed. When they reach the Mount of Olives some of them ask him: Tell us, when shall all this come to pass? Part of his answer is the gospel of today's Mass.

2. *The two destructions:*

(a) The Lord replies to the two questions, but the answers are mixed together:

Christ, the supreme prophet, sees the two destructions without separation in time or space, and thus he describes them. That is why it is difficult to interpret this passage or see exactly which remarks belong to the fall of Jerusalem and which pertain to the end of the world.

(b) However, it is clear that there are two destructions:

That of Jerusalem may be considered as a type of that which will take place at the end of time. The former was terrifying, according to Josephus; the latter will be more so.

3. *The terrifying nature of the end of the world and the judgement of Christ:*

(a) It is clear from the words used in the Gospel: There will be distress then such as has not been since the beginning of the world, and can never be again (Matt. 24. 21)... then it is that all the tribes of the land will mourn.

(b) St Luke uses the phrase: Men's hearts will be dried up with fear ... (21. 26).

(c) St John's description in the Apocalypse points to the same thing.

(d) It was this factor that inspired the picture of the Last Judgement painted by Michelangelo, in which all the figures, even including that of our Lady, seem to be shrinking in fear.

(e) The *Dies Irae* of Thomas of Celano contains the same thought of terror at the judgement of the Lord.

(f) The Preface of the Gelasian Sacramentary seems unable to find words strong enough to describe that day. Oh! How hard and difficult will that day be! How terrible and frightening! ... A day

of wrath, of tribulation and anguish, of calamity and misery, of darkness, fog and torment. . . when the just will be frightened and confused, as each and every cause is heard and to each is given according to his works.

4. *Terrible because of the things which happened before it:*

(a) It is the last crisis of nature, the last struggle in the battle for life . . . before the anger of God comes down on a world stained with sin.

(b) If men are terrified at the thought of a coming war, which will be much worse than any which have gone before, why should not they tremble before the thought of the prophecy of Christ concerning the last day ?

- i. There will be wars and rumours of wars;
- ii. nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom;
- iii. famines, earthquakes in various places;
- iv. and these are only the beginnings of sorrows. Later will come the cosmic disturbances spoken of in today's gospel.

5. *Terrible because it will reveal our lives to the world:*

(a) Whatever is hidden shall be made known. . . . Hypocrisy abounds in this life. Men are ashamed of their sins and try to hide them, doing them in secret as if no one saw them. In that day all, even the most secret things, -will be made known.

(b) What would we feel if, today, at this moment, we had to appear before our fellowmen as we really are, with all our secret sins, thoughts, desires, actions, revealed ?

6. *Terrible because it closes the gates of mercy:*

(a) If the sinner could only repent; but no, there is not time for that; he will see then how easily he could have saved his soul through the merits of Christ's passion, but now those same merits are turned against him, because they increase his guilt.

(b) That blood was once shed for the sinner; now' he sees it as an instrument of his condemnation. The Jews once cried out: His blood be upon us and upon our children. The immediate result was the destruction of their city. A like phrase is on the lips of the sinner; and Christ waits only for the day of judgement, then his revenge will fall upon sinners.

7. *Let the sinner awake :*

(a) All men, by their sins, are preparing for themselves the day of God's anger. The more they sin, the more anger and the more punishment they are storing up.

(b) Today's gospel is a warning to sinners to awaken and watch. If today you hear his voice harden not your hearts.



E: Particular and general judgement

The truth about the universal judgement

1. In today’s gospel there is no express mention of the judgement of Christ, but rather of his second coming, at the end of time, in power and majesty’. But this takes with it, according to the same Evangelist, the judgement (cf. 25. 31-32).
2. We repeat this in the Creed: who will come to judge the living and the dead.
3. This universal judgement will not be a revision of the particular judgement at the hour of death, but a confirmation of it. The former sentence will not be changed in the slightest; it will merely be pronounced in a more solemn fashion.

An objection

It is often said : But why another judgement if it is not going to change the former one? Since God does nothing uselessly, it is clear that he must have his reasons for it. Let us see if we can detect some of them, to get from them practical applications for our lives.

1. *The last judgement because of man's social as well as individual aspect:*

Man is both an individual and also a member of society—due to these two aspects we have a double judgement.

(a) Man is a social animal, and his actions have, not merely an individual value, but also an influence on those with whom he lives.

(b) Those who had, by reason of their office or profession, greater influence on others, will be especially judged on that day; parents, superiors, priests, those in authority in government, intellectuals, professors, writers . . . they will all have to render an account of their influence on others, for good or evil.

2. *Universal judgement because of the complete triumph of Christ:*

(a) Men have done him really grave injustices. He came in peace and mercy to save all men; yet many have rejected him, mocked him, attacked his teaching, violated his sweet law.

(b) But his day will come, and then all things will find their centre in him. He must be both proclaimed and acclaimed publicly, because he has been publicly rejected and dishonoured. It is necessary that sinners should both realize and admit their error when they thought and said that they were free to act as they thought fit, instead of doing the will of Christ, which is that of God. They also must now pay him homage.

3. *The judgement as an act of praise for God's providence in the government of the world:*

(a) Men and nations are governed by the providence of God;

(b) but this is often secret. Often the wicked appear to triumph, while the good have to suffer hardships. Human pride does not know how to explain this secret working of providence. The cry is raised: Can there be a good God? One who permits these things to happen? Why does not God, if he be just, wipe out these evil men? It is a mystery.

(c) But that mystery will be revealed at the last day. Then it will be seen that the good were more than repaid for their troubles, since they were purified by them as in a divine crucible.

(d) It will be a day of triumph for the wisdom and providence of God, who governs all things sweetly, gently and firmly at the same time. He will give to each his due. He will take away for ever the tribulations of the just and will heap upon them eternal happiness; while the wicked, deprived of all their temporal happiness, will be plunged into eternal misery. Truly a day of triumph for the power of God, which can draw good out of evil and so fulfil his plans for our salvation.

4. *Universal judgement:*

There must be this in order that there may be a complete judgement. The sinner would not be judged completely without it.

(a) Even though death brings an end to man's life, still he remains in dependence on many things in the future;

i. *there is his good or bad reputation*, which still endures in the minds of men;

ii. *in his children*, which are something of their parents, a continuation of them, so to speak;

iii. *in the effects of his actions*—the errors of heretics or the preaching of the apostles;

iv. *in his writings, speeches, example, for good or evil*: Voltaire, Chesterton;

v. *in the things to which he devoted the desires of his heart*, things which still remain. All this must come under the divine judgement; and they cannot be made manifest in the course of time; it must be at the end of time, when their full effects are known.

(b) All things must be submitted to Christ—the body as well as the soul, because the two make up the complete individual.

Take heed for your salvation

i. The application of this sermon must be the same as any other on this theme—you know not the day nor the hour. Work from this very moment for your eternal salvation.

2. We may well end with an eloquent passage from Monsabré: With age, your beaut}\* will wither, the light of your intelligence will grow dim, the powers of your will grow weaker. . . . All this means that, ven\* soon now, you will appear before the throne of your great Judge. Will you hear from his lips blessings or a curse? I know not. All I know is that you must take precautions and work out your salvation, as the apostle says, in fear and trembling.

## F: The particular judgement

### i. *After death, the judgement:*

(a) In the gospel we have the description of the last coming of Christ in power and majesty; but before that there will be another, also one of justice, but in secret.

(b) It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgement (Heb. 9. 27). There will be no lapse of time between death and the appearance of Christ, our judge. At that very moment, there before the dead I dy, over which your relatives are weeping, the judgement will take place. You close your eyes to the world and open them to see the face of Christ—at that very moment.

### 2. *Christ, the judge:*

As God and Man—his is the power to judge all men.

#### (a) As God:

Wisdom is proper to a judge, and to all judgement. Without it no judgement will be just. The more wisdom and experience the judge has, the wiser will be his judgement; the more he knows of the case, the circumstances, etc.—so much the more complete will be his sentence.

#### (b) Christ is wisdom itself, Truth itself, born of the Father:

That is why he has the power to judge. Nothing is hidden from him; he knows all things.

#### (c) As man:

He has received from God the power to judge all men;

i. *he is the head of a vast body*; all men, in one sense or another, are his members. He has the fulness of grace; from him come to his members inspirations, movements of grace, necessary for their salvation. Not one is exempt, not one forgotten. To him, then, as man, it belongs to judge those who have made good use of his graces and those who have failed to make use of them.

ii. *he is the living Law for our conduct*. Loaded with our weakness—except sin, he taught us how to live so as to please God (John 13. 15). A human judge hears a case and pronounces sentence according to a code of laws. Christ is the living code of law by which all men will be judged.



3. *Neither accuser nor witnesses:*

(a) In human judgement:

Because of man's limited capacity, there is need of both. But not in the divine judgement. The two are now face to face: Christ and myself. There is no need for anyone else. He knows perfectly all the details of my life. As St Thomas says: Christ, in his judgement, will use your own conscience as prosecutor.

(b) There will be no need for witnesses:

In this case, the facts will be obvious to all without them. That evidence will determine your sentence without need of witnesses (*ibid.*).

(c) There will be no need for an examination of the case:

In one instant all will be made plain and the whole history of your life will appear (St Teresa). Even those things which were most hidden and secret. God will make the truth manifest, bringing to light simply that which exists—the facts. The story of your life is like a record on a film; at the moment of the judgement that film will be revealed in all its minor details, by a divine light which shines on the soul.

4. *Graces and sins—the matter for the judgement:*

(a) The matter for judgement, according to the Apostle, is good and bad actions. All of us have a scrutiny to undergo before Christ's judgement seat, for each to reap what his mortal life has earned, good or ill, according to his deeds (2 Cor. 5. 10).

(b) According to Christ himself, in the parable of the talents, it is a question of merits or lack of them (Matt. 25. 14-30; Luke 19. 11-28).

(c) Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and once you are face to face with him, then it will be obvious if you have walked with him, believed in him, lived in him.

i. *On the one hand you will see all the graces Christ has given you ;* you will see that each and every moment of your life was a grace from God, because all things are ordained by his providence for your salvation, even those things which appear humiliating and adverse ;

ii. *on the other side, your sins—*against God, against yourself, against your neighbour. Infidelities, cowardice, hypocrisy, false shame . . . etc.

iii. You will then know that to be faithful in small things leads to the very heights of sanctity, while small infidelities prepare the way for great sins;

iv. you will discover the great value of prayer, self-denial, watching; you will deplore the loss of time in seeking your own comfort, caprice, laziness, self-love;

v. in a word, you will see the boundless mercy of God for you and your lack of co-operation with that mercy and grace.

v III. *are on the way to God's judgement:*

(a) The life of man is a journey towards God's judgement of his life. Even' second brings you nearer to that judgement.

(b) At every moment Christ comes to you—now, as the merciful judge, as long as you wish to meet him. At the moment your sentence will always be the same: I absolve thee from thy sins. There will always be the same advice: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

### G: Judgement without mercy for the sinner

1. A sentence against which there is no appeal—condemnation for the reprobate. It is summed up by St James (2. 13).

2. *The reasons for the condemnation:*

(a) Simple things were demanded of them:

Things they could all do . . . a glass *of water*, a little bread, an old garment, a word of consolation or help . . . these are the easy roads which lead to the kingdom of heaven. God, who pardoned on Calvary for one word of belief in him and *of repentance*, has made the gaining *of the kingdom* a simple matter (Alonso de Cabrera).

The works of mercy which are asked of us are things we all know *of: hunger, thirst, need for help. There is no need for much reflection*, but a simple realization of life to make us aware of them in our brother and a fraternal charity to help him.

(b) The high wages paid for their observance and the harsh punishment for their neglect:

- i. *the wages*—eternal life in heaven,
- ii. *the punishment*—hell for eternity.

(c) The dignity of the person who asks it:

Christ is the one who is hungry, thirsty, in need—what we do to these, the least of our brethren, we do to him directly.

(d) The right he has to ask this of us:

i. *all our goods are from God*, and when we give to the poor, who are his representatives, we are doing no more than return to him that which is his.

ii. *the giving of alms is an honour God does to us* and a trick of his mercy, which gains new merits for us before him, acquired at the cost of those things which we have received from him.

(e) This was the code which Christ imposed repeatedly:

- i. the Old Law was reduced to the precept of love (Matt. 22. 37);
- ii. love for the neighbour described for us in the parable of the Samaritan (Luke 10. 30-37);

iii. the obsession with this idea of love for others which was the theme of his discourse at the last supper (John 15.12).

(f) This is what he taught by the example of his life:

- i. He came to give relief from misery, bodily and spiritual.
- ii. From the Incarnation to the Cross there is only one word—that of mercy.
- iii. Christ is the only road to heaven. Those who depart from the road of mercy depart from Christ, whose example they should follow, and end up naturally, in hell.

## H: Works of mercy

1. *The programme on which we shall be examined on the day of judgement:*

We should be grateful to our Saviour for having revealed it to us beforehand.

(a) This programme takes in the works of mercy and demands not merely a theoretical knowledge but also practical application of it.

(b) Let us fix our attention on it so that we can plan a life for ourselves on the lines laid down by the Gospel.

2. *The excellence of mercy:*

It will be clear if we see it in the person of our Lord.

(a) God wishes to make his mercy manifest above all his other attributes (cf. Ps. 107. 5; 118. 64).

(b) He prefers mercy to any other duty: I will have mercy and not sacrifice (Matt. 9, 13), that is to say, he prefers the interior cult of the heart to the exterior; in case of conflict between them, the exterior must follow the interior.

(c) It is the most beautiful manifestation of the love of God. It makes access to him easy, because it forgets entirely the gulf created by our sins, in the works of mercy which we do.

3. *The practice of mercy. What are these acts?*

(a) In benefit of the living:

Corporal works of mercy:

- i. visiting the sick;
- ii. giving food to the hungry;
- iii. water to those who are thirsty;
- iv. opening our house to those without shelter;
- v. clothing the naked;
- vi. freeing those who are in bonds.

Spiritual works of mercy:

Filling the gaps in our brother's mind and heart, bringing to him the full flood of God's revelation; teaching, coing, grrectiving



counsel, consoling. These are the works which are most pleasing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

(b) For the dead:

- i. *burial*—the last homage we can pay them in this life; they have been the temples of God;
- ii. *pray for them and offer suffrages for their souls*, to free them from purgatory.

4. *The grades of perfection in these works of mercy:*

- (a) to be animated with a great compassion for those in need;
- (b) to help their material needs by our alms;
- (c) help souls in ignorance, difficulty, or sin;
- (d) seek them out in order to help them;
- (e) sacrifice goods for them, and even life itself. Follow the example of our Saviour.

5. *The model for our mercy:*

(a) Christ—who carried it to its perfection:

- i. moved by mercy, he came down from heaven and became man in order to make us like God;
- ii. he gave us his words, his example, his grace, his body and blood, and his very life on the cross.

(b) Mary, whom we call the Mother of Mercy.

(c) To give but one example from the lives of the saints:

St Vincent de Paul, who called the poor 'our masters and lords'. He proposed to his nuns this great general principle, which should rule their lives: You will remember always that the main end to which you are called is to serve the Lord, bodily and spiritually, in the person of the poor, at times as a child, at others as a man in need, as sick or in prison.

6. *Motive for works of mercy:*

- (a) If we have attained mercy from God, more reason why we should practise it with others.
- (b) We need mercy ourselves. We know our repeated falls and infidelities, which all look to God's mercy'.
- (c) It is the road to our happiness. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matt. 5. 7).
- (d) Christ is the one road to eternity; he is mercy itself, let us advance along the royal road of mercy', so as to arrive at the judgment, when the code of the laws of mercy will let all men see our works, even the most secret of them, so as to reward us for them.

## I: The triumph of the Cross

### 1. *Christy a judge with the signs of his passion:*

(a) St Thomas teaches us that Christ will come to judge us with the marks of his passion all glorious on his body.

(b) The Gospel of today warns us that, before Christ's coming, his sign will appear. That sign is the cross.

(c) What was once the wood of ignominy has become a throne; it is no longer an instrument of pain and punishment, but a manifestation of power and of triumph.

### 2. *The cross will divide humanity:*

(a) St Paul affirms that the good will be caught up into the air, to meet Christ;

(b) the evil will remain upon the earth;

(c) there will be a different place for the good and for the wicked; one at the right hand, the other on the left;

(d) there will be two groups, then, at that hour; one on each side of the cross; those who walked close to it, and those who refused to follow it. Those who kissed it, and those who trod on it. Two groups, corresponding to the two attitudes we can adopt with regard to the cross.

### 3. *The two attitudes:*

(a) They can be seen on that same evening on which the wood of the cross was sanctified:

i. close to the cross the small group of the friends of Jesus, Mary, the women, John;

ii. on the other hand the Jewish people ran away, frightened of it.

(b) St Paul refers to these two ways of looking at the cross; foolishness for those who are lost; the power of God for those who are saved (1 Cor. 1. 18).

Scandal to the Jews, madness to the Gentiles, power and the wisdom of God for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks (*ibid.* 23, 24).

(c) He says to those of Philippi that they are many who are the enemies of the cross of Christ (3. 18).

(d) He himself is one of the friends of the cross:

i. he is crucified with Christ (Gal. 2. 19);

ii. he will glory in nothing except the cross (Gal. 6. 14).

### 4. *The Christian and the cross:*

It is the patrimony of all true Christians, all must accept it, because it will come in any case. We might even say that the Christian should seek it out and embrace it. An admirable summary of this viewpoint will be found in the *Imitation of Christy* II. c. 12.

5. *The cross our life and hope:*

(a) It is necessary that we should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which is life, health and resurrection. That is the song of the Introit of Holy Thursday and the feasts of the Cross.

(b) From the cross come all our spiritual benefits and the whole of our interior life is included in it (*Imitation, loc. cit.*).

Over the tombs of Christians there is usually a cross with the words *Rest in Peace*. The symbol of our guarantee of peace and eternal rest is this embracing of the cross.

## J: Purgatory

1. *Judgement and purgatory:*

The judgement of which our Lord speaks to us in today's Gospel is awaited eagerly by the just, because it will bring them the fulfilment of their hopes and aspirations.

(a) Those who are in heaven will receive their bodies, glorious;

(b) if there are any just who are still in this mortal life, they also will receive their complete glorification ;

(c) for those in purgatory, their pain will come to an end;

(d) the judgement will bring an end to the tombs, the miseries, the very existence of purgatory.

(e) Today we may think of purgatory, so as to perform a work of mercy for those souls which will stand us in good stead on the day of judgement.

2. *Divine justice and mercy:*

The fact of purgatory is demanded by divine justice and mercy, also by the very holiness of God himself.

## (a) Divine justice:

i. God, who is by nature just, must exact the full satisfaction for sin ;

ii. there are venial sins which are not paid for in full in this life;

iii. there are relics of mortal sin, the temporal punishment which is frequently not pardoned in this life, and yet the account of which has to be paid sometime.

## (b) Divine mercy:

Since nothing defiled can enter heaven, there are many souls who could not have been glorified were it not for the fact that divine mercy created purgatory, where they can be purified by their punishments and can also receive the benefits of the intercession of the blessed and our suffrages.

## (c) The holiness of God:

The new Jerusalem demands citizens who are without stain of sin, just as if they had never sinned in Adam. All have to be formed in the image of Christ and his glory- (Phil. 3. 21).



3. *Our suffrages for the souls in purgatory are claimed:*

(a) by God himself:

- i. who loves them; desiring above all things their entrance into heaven with him;
- ii. who, at the same time, demands the full debt from them, which they can only pay by their sufferings;
- iii. he is delighted when his mercy can bring them relief through our suffrages.

(b) by the souls in purgatory:

They live in an extreme need :

- i. through the bitterness of their sufferings;
- ii. their loss of God for the time being—the God whom they love and long for above all things;
- iii. the bitterness of the thought of how easily they could have avoided sin and how simple it would have been to make satisfaction for it afterwards, had they thought of it;
- iv. the thought that all these sufferings are without merit, while had they been done in this life, they would have meant the heights of sanctity.

(c) in our own interests:

Through our suffrages we open the gates of heaven to these souls, thus realizing their hopes. Through it:

- i. they will be intercessors for us, so as to pay us back in some way for the favour we have done them;
- ii. we prepare an easy judgement for ourselves, because we have performed one of the greatest works of mercy. Then Christ will be able to say that he was there, in the suffering members, and that we came to visit him in his prison and also broke the bonds which held him captive there.
- iii. We also satisfied his hunger for these souls by opening the gates of heaven for them.

## K: St Catherine and Purgatory

i. *The portrait of the saint:*

(a) Catherine was born in Genoa of a noble family in the year 1447. She married Julian Adorno, but six years of unhappy married life with an unfaithful husband led her to seek consolation, if not in a bad life, at least in a worldly one. She was converted to a life of piety in 1473 and in her turn converted her husband. They lived exemplary lives of works of charity and mercy until he died in 1497. From 1500 until 1510, the year of her death, she had extraordinary visions and graces from God. During these she used to relate in a loud voice what she saw, and some of her visions were written down, the most famous being her visions of purgatory.

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(b) Through divine mercy she was placed in the purgatory of divine love and there purified completely herself. At the same time she describes the state of the souls in purgatory as she herself knew it.

### 2. *Some of her ideas and thoughts about purgatory:*

(a) Death of self-love is one of the characteristics of the state of souls in purgatory”

i. They desire nothing else but to remain where God has placed them and for as long as he wishes it. They love his justice and everything that he loves. They want what he wants and in the way that he desires it. They cannot think of themselves; their thoughts are all for God.

ii. They are confirmed in grace and love and can neither sin nor merit; they have no other will or desire but that of perfect love.

(b) The peace of purgatory:

i. There is no peace comparable with it, unless it be that which the saints enjoy in heaven.

ii. This peace increases as the love of God penetrates ever deeper into those souls, because the obstacles to the love of God disappear.

iii. These souls are like a mirror which is dirty and which, therefore, cannot reflect perfectly the light of the sun; but as it is gradually polished, so it does reflect that light ever more perfectly.

(c) Sufferings—which cannot be described:

There is no tongue which can describe them nor intellect which can understand them, unless they are revealed by a special grace. The saint says that God has granted her this grace, but that she is still incapable of explaining that which she heard and saw. Those torments will never be wiped from her memory.

(d) Difference between hell and purgatory:

i. Those who die in mortal sin have their wills hardened, and since it is no longer possible for their sin to be forgiven, they remain in that state of hardness of heart.

ii. The soul remains for ever confirmed in good or evil, according to its state on leaving the body.

iii. The souls in purgatory are in perfect conformity with the will of God. They find themselves attracted to him with ever-growing love. They enjoy the certainty that one day they will see him and that then their thirst for the infinite will be satisfied.

iv. On the contrary, the souls of the damned can receive no light or help from divine goodness. They remain for ever in a state of war and hate against God and his will.

(c) The benefits of purgatory:

i. We shall never be able to realize how great has been the mercy of God in creating purgatory, a place of purification for the souls which leave the body with the debt of sin still to be paid.

ii. At that moment each soul goes at once to the place destined for it, and of its own will. If it is in mortal sin, to hell for eternity;

iii. if in venial sin or even with the least imperfection on it, it will not dare to seek God's presence in that state, but will voluntarily seek the purification of the pains of purgatory, rather than appear before God in that state.

iv. I have experienced, says the saint, that these pains are as fierce as those of hell, but the souls pay no heed to them, because for them the greatest pain is that of the loss of God for a time, their only love.

(f) The purification of the soul:

The saint uses the usual example of gold being purified in the fire. The soul dies ever more and more to self and grows more and more like God.

(g) Suffering and joy:

This is another characteristic of purgatory, to join intense suffering with equally intense joy, born of hope and love. It comes too from the divine love which subjects these souls to its captivity and infuses into them a peace beyond understanding and the hope of leaving purgatory one day. In these souls there is a twofold operation:

i. *the consideration of the divine mercy.* They know that one sin merits the most grievous punishments; they see that their punishment is most just, but they also understand that it has been merciful too.

ii. *they find tremendous satisfaction in the contemplation of the goodness of the divine decrees for them and in God's mercy.* Although they suffer, they also know that they are in the grace of God; and they know that they suffer less than they should, due to that love which envelops them.

3. *Reproaches of the saint against worldly people:*

Who will grant me the grace to shout out in a voice that will reach the ears of all men? Miserable creatures! How is it possible that you can be so blind, so engrossed in passing things, without value of any kind, as you will see for yourselves at the hour of death? You make no provision for the great need you will have when you enter into eternity. Do not say that you put all your trust in divine mercy, because it is precisely the way you are rejecting and despising that divine mercy now, which will be the cause of your final condemnation. The goodness of God should make you inclined to do his will. But you, unhappy creatures, persist in doing



your own sinful will. God is merciful; but he is also just. If you reject the path his love has set out for you, then you will meet him in the terrible days of his justice.

### L: Eternal rest

In the *City of God* St Augustine has a chapter dedicated to the eternal happiness of the city of God and the sabbath of rest. We give here a summary of the main ideas.

#### 1. *One sole occupation:*

(a) In that happiness there will be no evil, no good which is wanting; all will be one long praise of God.

(b) The blessed will not be idle through laziness; nor will they need to work. God will fill the whole of their souls.

#### 2. *The prayer of a glorified body:*

The whole of our body with all its members will have one sole occupation. All need will have ceased and now there will be but one long, eternal happiness most certain and secure. The soul infused with his light will, in its turn, enlighten the body; and the whole man will sing the praises of God.

#### 3. *Glory, honour, peace:*

(a) There will be the only true glory; there we shall all know the truth about the lives of others, the honour of others and their glory. This glory will be free from false flattery and error.

(b) There true honour will reign, which is not given except to the one who merits it and is not given to those who have not earned it.

(c) There will be perfect peace, because neither within us nor without shall we have any adversaries.

(d) Nothing will upset us—what is more, nothing can ever attain to us in order to upset us in the slightest. On the contrary, everything will preach peace to us—the most profound peace.

#### 4. *All in all:*

(a) God will be all in all; all that men could desire, health, life, riches, glory, honour, love, peace and happiness—they will have all this, in God;

(b) we shall know what it means to love without being bored, to sing praises without becoming tired;

(c) we shall know the perfect community of goods, because there truth, love and life will be common to all.

#### 5. *No envy:*

(a) There will be community with diversity, because there will be superiors and inferiors;

(b) but so wise will the distribution be that there will be no envy in the inferiors. All will live in complete concord; each will live

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completely content with what he has, and will praise the wisdom of God who has given to his brother a higher reward than to him.

### 6. *Perfect free will:*

There we shall be like God, unable to sin—which means perfect freedom, because he who sins is the slave of sin (John 8. 34). O City of rest, where there will be but one will in all, free from all evil and filled with all good!

### 7. *The past evils:*

Our minds will remember past evils, but there will be no suffering on that account. It will be like a doctor who, by his medical knowledge, knows all evils and the reason for all pain, but he himself is not in pain, nor does he suffer.

### 8. *We shall be like gods:*

(a) God rested on the seventh day—and so shall we, when that day comes for us.

(b) There we shall be at rest, and we shall know God as he is in himself. At the same time we shall realize the stupidity of our first parents who wanted to be like him; because they sought it in their ολνη way, they separated themselves from him.

(c) There we shall know that we were destined to be gods, not by rebellion, like our first parents, but by a share in his life which divine mercy has held out to us.

(d) There we shall rest and we shall see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise. See what we shall do, then, in this end without end. For what is our end except to attain possession of that kingdom which has no end?

## M: Song of triumph

### i. *The God of mercy:*

(a) It is suggested that, if it is at all possible, we should read Psalm 117 to a person who is dying, a psalm which bears the heading *A song of triumph*. It is one long song of praise to the divine mercy.

(b) Every Christian ought to die singing in his heart to those whom he is about to leave on this earth: Give thanks to the Lord; the Lord is merciful, his mercy endures for ever. Echo the cry, Israel... echo the cry, all ye who are the Lord's worshippers (w. 1-4).

### 2. *The faithful God:*

(a) The dying person may well say with the psalmist: I called on the Lord when trouble beset me, and the Lord listened, and brought me relief (v. 5).

(b) Since he relies on God, he pays no heed to his enemies, visible or invisible. With the Lord to aid me, I have no fear of the worst man can do; with the Lord to aid me I shall yet see my enemies baffled (vv. 6-7).

(c) He rejoices at having put his trust in the Lord rather than in men—even in princes.

(d) What encouragement for the dying to hear these words, and what consolation for those around him!

3. *The struggles and dangers of the past:*

The psalmist recalls all past dangers and difficulties, from which he was saved by the might)' hand of God and his mercy (vv. 10-14).

4. *The sinner:*

(a) The psalmist admits that he did not always deserve praise and reward from God, but frequently only punishment for his sins;

(b) but in that very punishment he sees the Father of mercies. The Lord has chastened me, chastened me indeed, but he would not doom me to die (v. 18).

5. *The entrance into glory:*

(a) The dying person hears in anticipation the shouts of joy from heaven (v. 15), and he longs to join them. Open me the gates where right dwells; let me go in and thank the Lord (v. 19).

(b) When his eyes close to this world the gates of immortal life 'will be opened to the faithful soul, through God's mercy. This is the Lord's doings and it is marvellous in our eyes (v. 23).

6. *This is the day of the Lord:*

(a) Now the day of my life is approaching, may well be the cry of the dying man; the true day, because it is the day when I shall really begin to live. The psalmist says: This day is a holiday of the Lord's own choosing; greet this day with rejoicing; greet this day ■with triumph (v. 24).

(b) Behind us now lie the days we have made for ourselves; the days of our sinful life; the days which gave rise to illness, sorrow, affliction and tears.

(c) Before us lies the day of the Lord, that eternal day which knows no night. The day in which the goodness and the truth of God will never be blotted out from our eyes.

7. *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (v. 26).'*

There are many ways in which we can understand these words, especially when they are read at the bedside of one who is dying. They could mean the angel who comes to receive the soul once it leaves the body and take it to God's presence. It could be the voice of the angels in heaven who greet thus the soul in a state of grace, which is so soon to become one of them.

8. *The only possible commentary:*

The last two verses: Thou art my God, mine to acknowledge thee, thou art my God, mine to extol thee; thanking thee for giving me audience, thanking thee, my deliverer. Give thanks to the Lord; the Lord is gracious, his mercy endures for ever.



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